

Paul in Rome

ACTS 28:16 *And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.*

At that time in history Rome was the capital city of the Roman empire. The population of Rome then is estimated to have been just over two million people, of which a little more than a million were Roman citizens, the rest were slaves. The overwhelming majority of the population in Rome at that time was very poor, and there were beggars everywhere. The distance across Rome was about twelve miles.

When Paul arrived in Rome, it was with quiet an escort. Paul's close friends Luke, and Aristarchus of Thessalonica were still with him. Those brethren from Rome who had sought Paul out on the road to Rome were still with him. Paul still had fellow prisoners in his group, all who had appealed unto Caesar to hear their individual cases. Plus the Roman soldier escorts who were each assigned a prisoner. Over seeing all of the prisoners, and soldiers was Julius, the Roman centurion who had befriended Paul ever since leaving Caesarea. How many were in this group is not told us exactly in scripture, but it must have been over twenty people. Had Paul been allowed to travel to Rome by himself, with just Luke and Aristarchus by his side, one has to wonder how he would have fared. Probably not as well as he had with the Roman Empire providing all this care for him. Of course we know it was the Lord who took care of Paul, and it is the very same Lord who takes care of you and me.

As we see in ACTS 28:16 Julius completed his military mission of delivering the prisoners to the captain of the Praetorian Guard of Caesar's soldiers here in Rome. The Roman Emperor at this time in history was Nero, who had been Caesar since 54 A.D. Nero died in 68 A.D. which may have been the same year Paul was executed. History records that the captain of Nero's guard in the spring of 61 A.D. was a fellow named Sextus Afranius Burrus, whose official duty it was to keep in custody all the accused people who were to be tried before the Emperor. His title was praetorian prefects, and he was responsible for the Emperor's safety, thus Burrus was considered to be the most important subject of the Emperor, and was also considered to be one of Nero's best tutors and advisors. Burrus died the following year after Paul arrived in Rome, having apparently been poisoned by Nero, and the history of Nero just gets worse and worse from there.

Perhaps Julius knew Burrus, and maybe not, however Julius here showed Paul one final courtesy, requesting of Burrus that Paul be allowed to have a residence separate from the other prisoners. Apparently it was made known to Julius by King Agrippa, and governor Festus that the Apostle Paul was really no malefactor, and he was to be treated in a different manner than the other prisoners. Of course we know Julius treated Paul fairly all along this journey, and now Julius convinced Burrus to let Paul have a private residence. That is why we read here in ACTS 28:16 *...but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.* The Greek word translated "suffered" here is epitrepo {ep-ee-trep'-o}, (number 2010 in The Strong's Greek Concordance), and here means: to permit, to allow, or to give leave. One translation notes here that "Paul received permission to live by himself, guarded by a soldier." Thus we see that Burrus complied with Julius' request. And the soldier assigned to Paul was rotated amongst Caesar's best who guarded the Emperors palace.

Think about all of this again for a moment. This whole fourth missionary journey of Paul's from Jerusalem to Rome has been accomplished with Paul being in the custody of the Roman Empire. They have provided his shelter, his safe transportation, and covered all of his expenses on this journey! Of course the reality of all of this is that the Lord is the One who provides the means necessary to get us to the point where He wants us to be. A Roman chain is no obstacle to God. Neither is time, nor distance a problem too big for our mighty Lord and Saviour. The Lord had put a desire in Paul's heart to someday go to Rome, and the Lord had now gotten Paul to Rome with incredible adventure. But Paul wasn't hurt along the way, and many eyes were opened to the true Light of Jesus Christ in this whole process. Many turned from darkness to Light, and from the power of Satan unto God, and received forgiveness of sins even on this journey,

so far. And while Paul was detained for a couple of years in Caesarea, several close friendships were developed, and some of Paul's friends took the time to get better acquainted with Paul, and learn Paul's gospel from Paul's mouth, thus they got to learn more about the inheritance among them which are sanctified by the faith they had in Christ Jesus. {Review again ACTS 26:16-18.} No doubt Philip the evangelist, who lived at Caesarea, was one of the privileged who got to hear Paul's gospel message one-on-one during those two years. Now the Lord has gotten Paul safe to Rome while at the same time allowing Paul to fulfill the ministry the Lord gave him to do way back there on the road to Damascus. And the Lord isn't through with Paul yet!

Just take a moment to reflect on all of this that happened to Paul in his life, and note how God's best sometimes is wrapped up in what we might consider an odd looking package. Here we find Paul himself guarded by the very same well trained soldiers who guarded the Emperor! They were considered Caesar's best. Only the Lord could write such a script. Do we recognize, and appreciate God's best? We do if we realize, and are thankful for the fact that God gave us the best Saviour in Jesus Christ our Lord. He gave us the best Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, to Guide into all truth. He gave us the best Apostle to follow, which is the Apostle Paul, who followed Christ. He gives us the best pastors and teachers, who are the ones that encourage us to follow Paul as he followed Christ; that further encourage us to run the race to win the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, which is the best opportunity offered to anyone during this church age. And God gives us the best individually designed tribulations and trials to test our faith in Him, to the end that we too may realize that God has provided some better thing for us than that which was offered in ages past, which is to be qualified to be the Bride of Christ! Many Christians don't see this because they are spiritually discerned as noted in 1 CORINTHIANS 2:14. *1 CORINTHIANS 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* Spiritually discerned simply means lacking spiritual insight, thus the true value of something valuable is missed because it's true value can only be revealed by the Spirit of God.

Certainly Paul recognized all of that had taken place in his life so far was God's way of giving him God's best. Here in ACTS 28:16 the Lord has made provision for Paul to have his own private residence at Rome. Yet all this time Paul was still a prisoner of the Roman Empire! Paul's new residence was separate from the other prisoners, and Paul's new quarters became like a church, as we will see in the closing verses of ACTS 28. Thus he was allowed of God to preach his gospel message here in Rome, without outside interference. For now let's note a couple of points. The first point to keep in mind is found in ACTS 28:30 & 31, where we read: *And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, 31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.* Here we find Paul staying in "his own hired house" at Rome for two more years. Whether this is the same place of verse 16 we are not told. However we also see here that Paul was allowed to freely receive all that came unto him, preaching to them the kingdom of God, and teaching them the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul wasn't free to go out amongst the people of Rome and do this teaching and preaching, rather the Lord saw to it that those who wanted to could come and hear Paul unabated. Once again this is really quite amazing if you think about it. Keep in mind here also that verse 31 points out Paul had freedom of speech, for no man was forbidden to come unto Paul during this time, if they wanted to hear him. In other words the Roman soldier in charge of Paul was under orders not to forbid anyone who wanted to see Paul, to see him.

There is a good explanation why Paul would be in his own hired house for two years. It is thought that after appealing unto Caesar in ACTS 25:8, and appearing before King Agrippa back in ACTS 26, that Agrippa almost immediately sent Paul to Rome. Recall what governor Festus said as he introduced Paul to King Agrippa: *ACTS 25:24 And Festus said, King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye see this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem, and also here, crying that he ought not to live any longer. 25 But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself hath appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him. 26 Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord.*

Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and specially before thee, C king Agrippa, that, after examination had, I might have somewhat to write. 27 For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes laid against him. At the conclusion of Paul's defence before King Agrippa we read in ACTS 26:32 *Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar.* Within days Paul was on his way to Rome. Of course the Jews who had wanted Paul dead ever since ACTS 21:31, still wanted Paul dead. However by the time they found out that Paul had been shipped to Rome it would have been too late in the season for them to get the proper group of accusers to follow him to Rome, and present their side of Paul's case before Caesar. Thus the earliest that the Jews of Jerusalem could go to Rome would be the following spring when sailing was safe again, which happens to be the time frame we are in ACTS 28:16. By the time they would get to Rome and present their side of Paul's case it would be late summer. No doubt Caesar then would want to hear from witnesses, and he probably would give them about twelve months to bring these witnesses from all over the Empire before him. By the time all of this process takes place, two years goes by. Lord willing we will discuss this further later.

Consider this also from the Roman perspective. Nero, the Caesar at this time in history, didn't know Paul either, and probably hadn't even heard of him yet. Yet Paul was now detained in a part of Caesar's household, and PHILIPPIANS 4:22 records that many of Caesar's household will eventually get saved because of the ministry of Paul. Nero at this time isn't about to jump through hoops just to hear Paul's case once he finds out about Paul. Burrus will soon give Nero a list of the newly arrived prisoners who will have cases to present before the Emperor when their prosecutors arrive, which as we noted above, will take at least a couple of years to accomplish in Paul's case. Since Nero answers to no one, he can hear a case whenever he feels like it. The end result of all of this is that Paul will be detained in Rome for some time, at least two years or more. Perhaps Paul suspected this long delay, and maybe not, but whatever came his way, Paul knew that he was to be about the Lord's business.

Another point we should also keep in mind as we continue to study about Paul's time here at Rome is that even though Paul was allowed some liberties in speech, and preaching, and teaching, he still was a prisoner awaiting his appeal before Caesar. Thus in one of Paul's first visits from the Jews of Rome, Paul makes this statement found in ACTS 28:20 *For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.* Here we see that even though Paul was permitted to have his own hired house as a prisoner here at Rome, he still was bound with a chain, which most likely was constantly attached to the Roman soldier assigned to him as noted in verse 16.

Many references are made in Paul's future writings concerning being a prisoner, and this prison chain that had been a part of his life ever since his arrest in Jerusalem. Let's review a few of these scriptures. EPHESIANS 3:1 *For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,...* ...4:1 *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,...* ...6:20 *For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.* PHILIPPIANS 1:7 *Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace. ...13 So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; 14 And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. ...16 The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds:....* COLOSSIANS 4:3 *Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: ...4:18 The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen.* 2 TIMOTHY 1:16 *The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain:...* PHILEMON 1:10 *I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds: ...1:13 Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel:...* Note in all of these above references to his being a prisoner, not one time do we find Paul complaining, for he knew he was a prisoner of the Lord Jesus Christ; an ambassador in bonds. And think about this also, if Paul were free do you think he would have been

able to preach, and witness to those of Caesar's household? Probably not, yet we read this in PHILIPPIANS 4:22 *All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household.* These two or so years as a prisoner in Rome was the Lord's way of helping Paul reach those of Caesar's household. Brother Hill used to say: "When in the King's dungeon, look for the King's wine." No wonder then that the Apostle Paul was able to write in PHILIPPIANS 4:11 *...for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.* Truly Paul was running his race with patience, and always looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of his faith, which he later wrote about in HEBREWS 12:1 & 2.

So we find Paul in his new quarters here in Rome, and after three days of settling in we find this statement in ACTS 28:17 *And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together:...* This is an amazing statement. No doubt this was a different group than those brethren that came out to meet Paul on the road to Rome. The brethren who came out from Rome to greet Paul as he passed through Appii forum, and the three taverns were not necessarily Jews anyway, but rather Saints who deeply loved the Lord, and who really appreciated Paul's gospel, even if they had only heard him through his letters and epistles. Recall something here that we have noted many times before in this study, and that is when Paul came into a new city, he always, if possible, first went to the Jewish synagogue, if the city had one, and sought an opportunity to speak. Since Paul went to these services dressed as a well educated Pharisee, often the person in charge of the service would ask if he had anything to say. This gave Paul the opportunity to preach unto the Jews first in nearly every city he went too. Since the Jews often were the influential business men of a city, Gentile associates often came to these Sabbath day services also. This sometimes was how Paul found an open door to also preach the gospel of Jesus Christ unto the Gentiles of a particular city. On your own review ACTS chapter 13 to see how this was. But here in Rome Paul was a prisoner attached to a Roman soldier by a chain, and confined to certain prison quarters. Sure he was allowed his own residence, but he was not given the freedom to tour the city, and visit any one. Paul could not go out to the synagogue at Rome, if there was one there, for he was a prisoner. So we find here in ACTS 28:17 that Paul reached out to the Jews of Rome by requesting that the chief of the Jews of Rome come to his own residence see him. There was a potential of some threat against Paul here, for recall that it was the chief of the Jews of Jerusalem who had informed the governors of Judaea against Paul, and perhaps news of their encounters with Paul had reached these chief Jews of Rome. And maybe not, however Paul knew not one way or the other, for what they knew of him positive, or negative did affect Paul's desire to preach unto these chief Jews of Rome about Jesus. On the other hand Paul was now still afforded the protection of the Roman Empire as he awaited trial, so the risks of bodily harm against Paul in a meeting with the chief of the Jews of Rome was highly unlikely. Besides Paul's mission on this missionary journey to Rome was the same as all his previous missionary journeys: to do the work that the Lord had called him to do while on the road to Damascus. Paul's meeting with the chief of the Jews of Rome was just a starting point in making sure those at Rome were given the opportunity to be established in Paul's gospel. In looking back over this scene some two thousand years later we can see that in essence these chief Jews of Rome lived almost next door to Paul for several years, so how important did they find Paul's gospel message? We will know the answer to this question when we get to heaven.

Let's read a few verses here to get the tone of what happens next. ACTS 28:17 *And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.* 18 *Who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me.* 19 *But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of.* 20 *For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.* 21 *And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judaea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee.* 22 *But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against.*

There are a couple of important questions that comes to mind as we think about this portion of scripture. First, did Paul know these Men and brethren of Rome? Second did these chief of Jews in Rome know Paul? It seems from this text that Paul did not know any of these men, yet he makes an assumption that they may have known him, for after all the brethren of Puteoli 125 miles to the south had heard of him. Besides that, way back in ACTS 17:6 we read *...These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also.* That was a reference to Paul and Silas ministry. After Paul spent three years in Ephesus, Demetrius accused Paul before all the silversmiths, saying in ACTS 19:26 *Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands.* In Jerusalem when Paul was seized by the Jews, they cried out in ACTS 21:28 *...This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place:...* . All Asia is a big place. All the world is a bigger place, and every where is even a bigger place, so no wonder Paul considered the possibility that these chief Jews of Rome had heard of him. Don't get confused between Paul addressing them as "brethren" here and verse 17, and the "brethren" of Puteoli in verse 14. The "brethren" of verse 14 were fellow believers in Jesus; brethren in Christ in other words. They may or may not have been fellow Jews. The "brethren" Paul addresses in verse 17 are fellow Jews, not necessarily fellow believers in Christ. When Paul called *...the chief of the Jews together...* in verse 17, he was calling fellows of his same national ancestry, which were Jews, but not necessarily believers in Christ. Also note that all of the eleven times we find the phrase "men and brethren" in scripture is in the book of ACTS, and each time it is a statement addressing Jews. For example when Stephen addressed the Sanhedrin council in ACTS 7:2, he said: *"...Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken;..."* Stephen was addressing them as brethren only in the sense that they were fellow Jews, not brethren in the Lord.

We see in verses 21 and 22 that these chief Jews of Rome had not heard one way or the other concerning the charges against Paul. *...We neither received letters out of Judaea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee. 22 But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against.* Note that they were vaguely familiar with Christian teaching, of whom Paul was an Apostle, but they knew nothing of Paul's doctrine.

Now that we have determined that Paul, and these chief of the Jews here in Rome didn't really know each other before now, let's consider some of the reasons why Paul called them to his residence in the first place. We mentioned above that there was a possibility that the chief Jews of Jerusalem had notified the chief Jews of Rome to be on the lookout for a well known Jew named Paul, who had completed offenses against the Roman Empire. Paul must have assumed they had heard something of his being known as a "pestilent fellow." Recall that Tertullus had stated back in ACTS 24:5 & 6: *For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes: 6 Who also hath gone about to profane the temple: whom we took, and would have judged according to our law.* Tertullus almost three years earlier than our time frame of ACTS 28 had first stated that Paul was a "pestilent fellow," meaning he was a danger to the security and welfare of society. Keep in mind here that Tertullus was laying out charges before a Roman governor, Felix, who would only be interested in offenses against the Roman Empire. This first charge was that Paul created disturbances among the Romans throughout the Roman Empire, which would have been considered an offence against the Roman government. Next he stated he was *"a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world,"* a flowery way of saying Paul was creating an insurrection against all the Jews in the world. This too could be considered an offence against the Roman Empire. Third Tertullus accused Paul of being *"a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes,"* meaning Paul was a follower of Jesus of Nazareth, a true statement stated in a demeaning manner. MATTHEW 2:23 explains a Nazarene, stating: *And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.* The offence against the Roman Empire here was that Paul was considered to have disturbed the Jews in the exercise of their religion, which was

guaranteed by the state. Implied in this accusation is that Paul introduced new gods, something that was prohibited by the Romans. The fourth accusation repeats one made in Jerusalem by the Jews, stating what they supposed had happened, and Tertullus claims that Paul *"hath gone about to profane the temple."* This was considered a crime which the Jews were permitted to punish.

These four accusations can be grouped into three charges against Paul, which are: (1) accusing Paul of causing dissension and disturbances among all the Jews throughout all the Roman Empire; (2) accusing Paul of being a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes; and (3) accusing Paul of an attempt to profane the Temple in Jerusalem. Paul now here in Rome assumed that certainly these chief Jews of Rome had heard at least a little of this. So here in ACTS 28:17-20 Paul has once again briefly explained what has taken place in his life these past two and a half years, defending himself, and saying: *...though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. 18 Who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me. 19 But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of. 20 For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.*

In this portion of scripture we also note more of the character of the Apostle Paul, and Paul later wrote about this characteristic in EPHESIANS 4. EPHESIANS 4:29 *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. 30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.* Here at Rome Paul didn't know these chief men of the Jews he was addressing, yet he showed them the love of Jesus by his actions and words. We must realize that these chief Jews of Rome didn't know Jesus, but they did know the law of Moses, thus the ministry of grace was a foreign concept to them. Yet the very first thing Jesus told Saul of Tarsus, our Apostle Paul, on the road to Damascus is that He was going to make him a minister. {See again ACTS 26:16.} We know that Paul became a minister of grace whose everyday speech ministered grace unto the hearers, as we just read here in EPHESIANS 4:29. As a close follower, and disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, Paul too ministered grace and truth, for JOHN 1:17 tells us that *...the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.* The point we need to see here is that these chief Jews of Rome knew by Paul's actions, and words, that he was not your ordinary law abiding Pharisee, for he spoke words of kindness, seasoned with grace and truth. The words of the legalist are cold, and harsh, seasoned with gloom and doom. Words of kindness, seasoned with grace and truth and love was the character of the Apostle Paul, a bridal Saint, who was letting the Lord Jesus Christ to grow up into him in all things! Paul later also wrote about this very thing in EPHESIANS 4:15, stating: *But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ....* So we note that these words that Paul spoke unto the chief Jews of Rome were not only words of kindness, seasoned with grace and truth, but were words by which the hearer could feel that he was speaking the truth in love, the love of Christ!

In verses 17 through 19 Paul quickly explains these last two and a half years plus of his life, but leaves out mentioning the majority of the trials and tribulations he had faced during this period of time. Note in this part of his testimony that Paul wastes few words about himself, and only says the minimum necessary to explain how he ended up in Rome in the first place. The main focus in Paul's life was Jesus, and his life since getting saved on the road to Damascus has been all about pointing others to Jesus. Thus we see Paul quickly getting to the reason for calling the chief of the Jews of Rome to come see him.

Note in ACTS 28:20 how Paul's words of grace, and truth, and love, focus first upon the chief Jews of Rome, so that they could begin to see a picture of Jesus Christ, for after all, Paul's attention was 100% focused upon Jesus. ACTS 28:20 *For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of*

Israel I am bound with this chain. No doubt Paul had thought and prayed for many years of what he would say if he ever got the chance to speak to the chief Jews of Rome. In fact Paul wrote of his prayer, and heart's desire for the Jew, for Israel, in his ROMANS epistle, which had already been read by so many there in Rome. ROMANS 10:1 *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.* 2 *For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.* 3 *For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.* 4 *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.* Back here in ACTS 28:20 we see that Paul told these chief of the Jews of Rome the importance of his calling for them to come unto him, so that he could indeed see them, and speak to them, and get them to begin to look, not at Paul and his prison chain, but upon the Lord Jesus Christ who had brought this grace Apostle unto them to personally speak words of truth in love unto them. We don't want to pass over this verse lightly, because these words of Paul are now forever recorded in scripture, reflecting in the word of God the Lord's heart attitude towards all men. Perhaps this will become clearer as we probe into some of the thoughts expressed here in verse 20, and the remaining verses of ACTS 28.

The Greek word translated "called" in verse 20 is the very same Greek word translated "desired" in ACTS 28:14, which we looked at before. {See page 1061 of these notes.} The Greek word used here is *parakaleo* {par-ak-al-eh'-o} (number 3870 in the Strong's Greek Concordance). *Parakaleo* comes from two Greek words; *para* meaning: near; and *kaleo* meaning: to call, thus simply put *parakaleo* translates into English as "to call near." *Parakaleo* here further means to call to one's side, or to one's aid, to admonish, exhort, to urge one to pursue some course of conduct looking to the future, to comfort, to intreat, to beseech, and to teach.

In your thinking, and meditation of verse 20, see beyond Paul's heart's desire here, and think of the Lord's desire first of all towards all men, then towards the believer, and more importantly see the Lord's desire for the full overcomer, the New Testament worthies of faith, which potentially is you, and me. Now let these words of verse 20 be words from the Lord that speak to your own heart: ...I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you:... . Note that there are three components attached to the three you's listed here. (1) ...I called for you, (2) to see you, and (3) to speak with you:... .

Of these three components let's consider the second point first. Realize that the Lord Jesus, the Omniscient, the Omnipotent, the Almighty (see REVELATION 1:8), already sees us, and has seen us from the eternity's past. He knows the number of hairs on our head; He knows our hearts intent; He knows our down sitting, and our uprising, and our thoughts afar (PSALMS 139:2). He searcheth the reins and hearts, (REVELATION 2:23), and there isn't any thing about us that he doesn't already know. We then need to see Him with our eyes of faith, and also realize: *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is...* 1 JOHN 3:2. In short he sees the Bridal Saint sitting with Him on the right Hand of God, ruling and reigning with Him!

Next turn your thoughts to the first component noted above: ...I called for you. Do you know your calling? Do you know the hope of your calling? Do you know the hope of His calling? Do you know you have been called with a Holy calling? A heavenly calling? Do you know about the high calling of God in Christ Jesus? Here are some of the scriptures that begin to explain such doctrines, all from Paul's gospel. 1 CORINTHIANS 1:26 *For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:* EPHESIANS 4:1 *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called...* . EPHESIANS 4:4 *There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling...* . EPHESIANS 1:18 *The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints...* . 2 TIMOTHY 1:9 *Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began...* .

HEBREWS 3:1 Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;... . PHILIPPIANS 3:14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. 1 THESSALONIANS 5:24 Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

The third component mentioned above of the things the Lord desires of the full overcomer is ...to speak with you.... The Lord has many tools that He can use ...to speak with you... but the primary method that He uses is by the word of the Lord. Sometimes He uses teachers, and preachers inspired by the Holy Ghost to magnify, and amplify the word of God, but the fact remains that the primary method He uses to ...to speak with you... is through the word of the Lord. We will spend a little time looking at this fact, and as we go through this thought keep in mind that the word of the Lord is another way of saying the Word of God, who is Jesus (REVELATION 19:13). Also bring to the fore front of your thinking ROMANS 10:17 *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* Stated in Old Testament terms we find ROMANS 10:17 reading like this: So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of the LORD. When the Apostle Paul wrote the Apostle Timothy in 1 TIMOTHY 4:13 *Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine...* he wasn't referencing just reading anything, but rather encouraging Timothy to be devoted to reading scripture, the word of God; the word of the LORD. When the Apostle Paul wrote the Apostle Timothy in 2 TIMOTHY 2:15 to *...Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth....* he was encouraging Timothy to study the word of God, the word of the LORD, which he called here the word of truth. The word of truth is scripture, called the gospel of your salvation in EPHESIANS 1:13. The word of truth is another way of saying the word of God, or the word of the LORD. To say it bluntly, Paul was telling Timothy to study his Bible. The Psalmist David writes in PSALMS 18:30 *As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him.* All the worthies of faith know the word of the LORD. If you ever take the time to search out the phrase "the word of the Lord," or "the word of the LORD," (the Old Testament phrase), you will find a close connection with the Old Testament worthies of faith, for they are the main one's in the Old Testament who heard, and heeded "the word of the LORD." Let's look at an example of this in the life of Samuel found in 1 SAMUEL 3. In 1 SAMUEL 3 we find the phrase "the word of the LORD" three times.

1 SAMUEL 3:1 *And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision.* (It's important to note here that the word "precious" found here means: rare; uncommon. An expounded translation reads *...in those days a message from the Lord was a rare treasure, and the word of the LORD was seldom heard; visions (from the LORD) were uncommon, and infrequent.*) 2 *And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see;* 3 *And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep;* 4 *That the LORD called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I.* 5 *And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down.* 6 *And the LORD called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again.* 7 *Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him.* 8 *And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child.* 9 *Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place.* 10 *And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth.* 11 *And the LORD said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle.* 12 *In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end.* 13 *For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.* 14 *And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's*

house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever. 15 And Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel feared to shew Eli the vision. 16 Then Eli called Samuel, and said, Samuel, my son. And he answered, Here am I. 17 And he said, What is the thing that the LORD hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide it not from me: God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide any thing from me of all the things that he said unto thee. 18 And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, It is the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good. 19 And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. (Note that the LORD was with Samuel, and the word of the LORD that was given to Samuel to speak unto the people were delivered by Samuel in faith, and these words accomplished what God had sent them forth to do. Stated another way, no word that was given of the Lord to Samuel to speak went unfulfilled.) 20 And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the LORD. 21 And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh: for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD.

There is a lot more things to study in 1 SAMUEL 3 than we want to emphasize here. We wanted to see from this chapter the importance of recognizing, hearing, and receiving the word of the Lord, and to grasp the concept of how the Lord has many methods of using the word of the Lord ...to speak with you. In Samuel's example above we find the Lord speaking the word of the Lord by night when Samuel lay down to sleep at night. Has the Lord ever interrupted your sleep to speak to you? If He has then you have experienced the thought we are trying to emphasize from ACTS 28:20, how that these words from the Lord that speak to your own heart really is His way of saying: ...I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you:... . Be sure to thank Him for such moments. Undoubtedly during such times the Lord is revealing Himself unto to you by the word of the Lord. Samuel didn't have nearly the scriptures we have, so ...the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD... as we just read in 1 SAMUEL 3:21. Whether it be the spoken word of the Lord, or the written word of the Lord, it is still the word of the LORD that causes us to ...grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ... 2 PETER 3:18. The Lord uses the word of the Lord to teach us, so we ...may grow up into him in all things... EPHESIANS 4:15.

Back to 1 SAMUEL 3 for a minute. We noted before reading the chapter that in 1 SAMUEL 3 we find the phrase "the word of the LORD" three times, which can be found in verses 1, 7, and 21. 1 SAMUEL 3:1 ...And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision. We noted how this meant that the word of the LORD was rare, and uncommon in those days; seldom heard. Unfortunately the word of the LORD is getting more rare and uncommon in our day too. Just open a newspaper and see how many times you can find the word of the LORD in it. In 1 SAMUEL 3:7 we read: Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him. It took some instruction, and some Godly guidance before Samuel could properly receive the word of the LORD for himself. ...Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child... in verse 8, and instructed Samuel what to do next. Simply stated, all Samuel had to do was acknowledge to the Lord that he heard the Lord calling him, and since the Lord had his ear, go ahead and speak. Samuel grew in grace and knowledge of the Lord, and as he did we read above: 19 ...and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. (Samuel treasured "the word of the LORD" and ignored none of the Lord's words.) 20 And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the LORD. 21 And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh: for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD.

Here is another point we need to notice here in 1 SAMUEL 3. The phrase "the LORD called" is found three times in this chapter: see verses 4, 6, and 8. Recently in reviewing the meaning of Bible numbers, I came across a meaning of the number three which may be somewhat ambiguous, and hard to see at first, but which makes a lot of sense when finally revealed to you. This particular meaning of the number three has to do with DIVINE PERFECTION. To quickly review, the number three also has to do with the TRINITY, RESURRECTION, and THE HOLY SPIRIT, the third agency of the TRINITY. Yet

God the Father, and God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are indeed the TRINITY; They are DIVINE PERFECTION, and these three, the TRINITY, work together to bring about DIVINE PERFECTION. DIVINE PERFECTION is kind of a hard concept to define, but can be easily detected with the help of The Holy Spirit. Yet in our lesson here in this portion of our study in the life of the Apostle Paul we really have just examined three more examples of DIVINE PERFECTION. So what were they? We need to see the word of the LORD bringing Samuel, and all full overcomers to the place of DIVINE PERFECTION. Study again these three times here in 1 SAMUEL 3 where the phrase "the word of the LORD" is used, and see if you get the concept that all full overcomers will get, of how the LORD reveals Himself to the overcomer by the word of the LORD. *...the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD...* 1 SAMUEL 3:21. This was how DIVINE PERFECTION was developed in Samuel's life. Samuel was an Old Testament worthy of faith, named by name in HEBREWS 11:32. Truly the Bride of Christ will be displayed as DIVINE PERFECTION, having let "the word of the LORD" to be revealed in her life too. Knowing, and studying "the word of the LORD," and letting the Holy Spirit *...Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever...* is how the Bride of Christ "made herself ready" as noted in REVELATION 19:7. {Study also HEBREWS 13:21.} We see in 1 SAMUEL 3 another way how the LORD worked DIVINE PERFECTION into Samuel's life, by noting the phrase "the LORD called" is found three times in 1 SAMUEL 3, and seeing that this phrase was placed here three times so that we too can better appreciate the DIVINE PERFECTION found in those that "the LORD called." Are you too among those "the LORD called?" Now bring your thinking back to ACTS 28:20 again where we were considering the three components attached to the three "you's" of verse 20: (1) *...I called for you,* (2) *to see you,* and (3) *to speak with you:*... Can you now glimpse DIVINE PERFECTION in these words *...I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you:*... ? Let the Lord reveal Himself to you by the word of the LORD, and thus attain DIVINE PERFECTION.

Back to what Paul said in ACTS 28:20 *For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.* Our focus now turns to the second half of this verse, whose subject matter is "the hope of Israel." Interestingly DIVINE PERFECTION is also manifest in this phrase: "the hope of Israel," which is found three times in scripture; once here, and twice in JEREMIAH. Paul makes the assumption that these chief Jews of Rome would be familiar with the scriptures referencing "the hope of Israel" in JEREMIAH, and wishes to make fully known unto them who "the hope of Israel" really is, if they didn't know already. JEREMIAH 14:8 *C the hope of Israel, the saviour thereof in time of trouble, why shouldest thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night?* JEREMIAH 17:13 *C LORD, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters.* Jesus is "the hope of Israel." Jesus is *...the saviour...* referenced in JEREMIAH 14:8. Jesus is *...the LORD,*... and Jesus is *...the fountain of living waters...* spoken of in JEREMIAH 17:13.

Let's spend a moment looking at this word "hope," which in The Strong's Greek Concordance is number 1680 elpis {el-pece'}, meaning here: to anticipate, usually with pleasure something good; such as a joyful and confident expectation of eternal salvation. Vine notes that "hope" describes the happy anticipation of good. Paul uses this word elpis {el-pece'} forty-two times in his own writings. Some examples of how Paul uses the word 1680 elpis {el-pece'}, "hope" in his epistles follows: ROMANS 5:2 *By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.* 2 CORINTHIANS 1:7 *And our hope you is stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation.* GALATIANS 5:5 *For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.* Perhaps one of the deepest, far reaching thoughts of elpis {el-pece'} is found in EPHESIANS 1:18 *The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,...* . EPHESIANS 4:4 *There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your*

calling;.... . COLOSSIANS 1:23 *If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;... . COLOSSIANS 1:27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:...* . 1 THESSALONIANS 5:8 *But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.* TITUS 1:2 *In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;...* . TITUS 3:7 *That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.* HEBREWS 6:11 *And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:...* . And in HEBREWS 10:23 *elpis {el-pece'}* is translated "faith:" *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;).* Obviously the Apostle Paul spent countless hours meditating upon the many aspects of "the hope of Israel."

Suppose for a moment that these chief Jews of Rome were not familiar with the scriptures in JEREMIAH referencing "the hope of Israel." JEREMIAH 14:8 *C the hope of Israel, the saviour thereof in time of trouble, why shouldest thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night?* JEREMIAH 17:13 *C LORD, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters.* If these chief Jews of Rome were not familiar with these scriptures, then certainly they would have been familiar with some, if not all, of the following Old Testament verses we are about to look at. PSALMS 31:24 *Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.* PSALMS 33:18 *Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy;* PSALMS 33:22 *Let thy mercy, C LORD, be upon us, according as we hope in thee.* PSALMS 38:15 *For in thee, C LORD, do I hope: thou wilt hear, C Lord my God.* PSALMS 39:7 *And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee.* PSALMS 42:5 *Why art thou cast down, C my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.* PSALMS 42:11 *Why art thou cast down, C my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.* PSALMS 43:5 *Why art thou cast down, C my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.* PSALMS 71:5 *For thou art my hope, O Lord GOD: thou art my trust from my youth.* PSALMS 71:14 *But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more.* PSALMS 78:7 *That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments:* PSALMS 119:81 *My soul fainteth for thy salvation: but I hope in thy word.* PSALMS 119:114 *Thou art my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word.* PSALMS 119:116 *Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live: and let me not be ashamed of my hope.* PSALMS 130:5 *I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.* PSALMS 130:7 *Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.* PSALMS 131:3 *Let Israel hope in the LORD from henceforth and for ever.* PSALMS 146:5 *Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God:* PSALMS 147:11 *The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.* JEREMIAH 17:7 *Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.* JEREMIAH 17:17 *Be not a terror unto me: thou art my hope in the day of evil.* JEREMIAH 50:7 *All that found them have devoured them: and their adversaries said, We offend not, because they have sinned against the LORD, the habitation of justice, even the LORD, the hope of their fathers.* LAMENTATIONS 3:24 *The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.* LAMENTATIONS 3:26 *It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.* JOEL 3:16 *The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.*

In all of these scriptures we reference made to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, whom Paul is calling "the hope of Israel" in ACTS 28:20, the same as Jeremiah did back in JEREMIAH 14:8, and JEREMIAH 17:13 noted above. Let's read ACTS 28:20 again: *For*

this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain. Now put all of what we have studied of this verse together, and see that Paul has asked these chief Jews of Rome to take notice, not of Paul, not of his chain, but of the reason he has been put in bonds, which is for preaching about *"the hope of Israel."* Jesus, *"the hope of Israel"* is the reason Paul has called for them, to see them, and wanted to speak with them. Jesus, *"the hope of Israel,"* who also is...*the hope of the promise made of God...* that Paul spoke to King Agrippa about back in ACTS 26:6, to whom he also said: *For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews...* in ACTS 26:7; this very same Jesus is whom Paul is trying to draw the chief Jews of Rome attention too. In Jewish terms *"the hope of Israel"* references The Messiah. In JOHN 1 we read of John the Baptist seeing Jesus, and announcing *"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."* {See JOHN 1:29 & 36.} Twice (SUFFICIENT TESTIMONY) John makes this proclamation *"Behold the Lamb of God."* Two of John the Baptists' disciples then began to follow Jesus, and one of the two disciples was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. In JOHN 1:41 we find Andrew coming to Peter and saying: *"We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ."* Saul of Tarsus found The Messiah, The LORD, *"the hope of Israel"* while traveling down the road to Damascus. Ever since getting saved on the road to Damascus Paul has been pointing all he came in contact with to the very same Just One Stephen had years earlier pointed him too back in ACTS 7:52. Take the time to review all of Paul's sermons we have discussed here in the book of ACTS, and see that the underlying theme of all his sermons, and all his speeches has been to point others to Christ. Nothing has changed in his focus since we first read of him preaching back in ACTS 9:20, where we found: *And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.* Here in ACTS 28 while in Rome, Paul can not go to the synagogue and preach, for he is now a prisoner. But he can request of the chief Jews of Rome, and anyone else who wishes, to come here what he had to say, and as we will see again when we get to verse 31, Paul continued preaching and teaching those things pertaining to the Lord Jesus Christ, *"the hope of Israel."*

Before we move forward into examining the chief Jews of Rome response to Paul having called them unto him, let's consider couple of more points worthy of note. In ACTS 28:20 we just read: *For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.* Notice that Paul didn't say *"for this cause I have written you,"* though he had much earlier written his epistle unto the ROMANS. Had these chief Jews of Rome read his ROMANS epistle, they certainly would have come to him sooner, just like the brethren who came out from Rome to greet him along the way. Furthermore Paul had already addressed many thoughts in his ROMANS epistle concerning *"the hope of Israel."* One of the many things Paul had written about in his ROMANS epistle was the fact ...*that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it...* which point Paul will mention to these chief Jews of Rome in verse 28. Let's look at one place in ROMANS where Paul highlighted these facts. ROMANS 15:4 *For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. 5 Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: 6 That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 7 Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God. 8 Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: 9 And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. 10 And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. 11 And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people. 12 And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust. 13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.*

In ACTS 28:21 & 22 we find the chief Jews of Rome response to Paul. ACTS 28:21 *And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judaea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee. 22 But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that*

every where it is spoken against. This statement gives Paul a clearer understanding of just exactly what the chief Jews of Rome knew of him, and what they knew of Jesus. Someone once told me, "nobody knows what you think they know." In other words we are not to make assumptions as to what others know, or don't know. To find out exactly what one knows, you must ask some questions, and listen carefully to the answers. Here in ACTS 28:21 we find Paul learning from the response of the chief Jews of Rome that they hadn't heard much, if anything of him specifically. In verse 22 we find that they knew something of the followers of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, but obviously they didn't know Jesus like Paul knew Jesus. It was for this very reason that Paul had called them to his quarters in the first place, so that they would have the opportunity to learn more of Jesus, and to get to know Jesus like Paul knew Jesus. From the chief Jews of Rome perspective, they too didn't know of Paul what they thought they knew of Paul, and his doctrine. Later in verse 24 we will find that after Paul was given the opportunity to spend a day with these very same Jews of Rome teaching them what he knew, and believed, that their response was: *And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.* Recall these words of Jesus spoken unto the Pharisee Nicodemus in JOHN 3:18 *He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.* In his letter that Paul wrote unto the Romans, he too addressed the subject of unbelief, stating in ROMANS 3:3 *For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? 4 God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.* Lord willing we will cover this topic in more detail when we study verse 24.

Looking a little closer at verse 21, one has to wonder about the sincerity of this statement. When they stated: *We neither received letters out of Judaea concerning thee...* did they not receive the epistle that Paul himself had written unto the ROMANS? Obviously not even though Paul wrote it "To all that be in Rome,..." ROMANS 1:7. In ROMANS 1:13 Paul notes: *Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.* Obviously these chief Jews of Rome were not Gentiles, thus we find their reason for not reading this epistle any further than this word "Gentiles," if they even read Paul's ROMANS epistle at all. Recall back in Jerusalem in ACTS 22 when Paul gave his defence speech before all the Jews assembled there, that they listened unto him until he mentioned the word "Gentiles" in ACTS 22:21. ACTS 22:22 then records: *And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.* Verse 23 further states that they then *...cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air,...* Such was the attitude of most Jews towards the Gentiles, especially concerning the preaching about "*the hope of Israel*" unto the Gentiles. Recall also how Peter too had faced the Christian Jews at Jerusalem concerning his going and preaching unto the Gentiles of the house of Cornelius back in ACTS 10 & 11.

So we conclude that these chief Jews of Rome hadn't read Paul's ROMANS epistle, but perhaps they had heard something of Paul. They don't come right out and say they have heard of him, but they don't deny that they hadn't heard of him either. They spoke of not having *...received letters out of Judaea concerning...* Paul, and secondly had noted that *...neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of...* Paul. In the absence of facts, we would have to assume that there certainly must have been a constant flow of Jews going back and forth between Jerusalem and Rome. Any written correspondence didn't seem to make mention of Paul. When the chief Jews of Rome would meet with any Jew who had recently been to Jerusalem, perhaps the subject of the Christians came up, and maybe even a brief account of what had taken place in Jerusalem concerning the Apostle Paul had been mentioned, at least in passing. Unless these Jews from Jerusalem who had traveled to Rome were closely connected to the Sanhedrin, there would be no way of really knowing what had happened unto Paul anyway, other than knowing he was being held prisoner by the Roman Empire. Besides, the chief Jews of Rome were most likely businessmen, and their interests centered around any business issues they were involved with. Of course they followed their Jewish roots in worship, and when they learned that a famous Jewish Pharisee was

under arrest, and being held prisoner here at Rome, they came to see how this might affect their business interests, and secondly to hear what he had to say. Of course this famous Pharisee was our Apostle Paul, who himself had now made known unto the chief Jews of Rome what had taken place in his life since being arrested in Jerusalem. Thus we see what these chief Jews of Rome know of Paul seems to be very limited.

ACTS 28:22 gets down to the business that Paul was most concerned with in their response to him: *But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against.* J. B Phillips translation of verse 22 reads: "We want to hear you state your views, although as far as this sect is concerned we do know that serious objections have been raised to it everywhere."

If these chief Jews of Rome had wanted to know what Paul thoughts were, all they had to do was read his ROMANS epistle. Again it is obvious that they had not read Paul's epistle unto the ROMANS. *But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest...* means that they wanted to hear Paul's opinion concerning the Messiah, whether He has already come, or not, and especially whether Jesus of Nazareth was truly the Messiah, "the hope of Israel" Paul had spoken of in verse 20, and if so, then they wanted to hear in Paul's own words what he had to say for the clearing up, and proving such doctrines embraced by the Christians.

Looking a little closer at the word "desire" in verse 22, we find that Vine's Dictionary of New Testament Words notes a better rendering of the word "desire" found in ACTS 28:22 would be: "We think it good to hear of thee." But as we will find by reading the next verse (*...And when they had appointed him a day...*), that they felt no urgency to hear what Paul had to say. They only sort of wanted to hear what Paul had to say, ...someday, not today, not now. They had now seen that Paul wouldn't be an interference to their businesses, so at a more convenient time for them they thought it would be good to hear of Paul's doctrine. In other words, they did not have a burning passionate "desire" to hear what Paul had to say, or what his thinking was. Their "desire" level was indeed low concerning hearing Paul tell of his doctrine. The reality of their thinking was that they wanted to compare what Paul thought, to what they believed. There is a hint here that perhaps they were looking upon what they thought Paul might say as a form of entertainment for themselves.

We find more of their reasoning as the Jews of Rome continued to address Paul, and express a little curiosity to hear him, stating in this fashion: Oh, and by the way Paul, *...as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against.* This word "sect" in the Greek is *hairesis* {hah'-ee-res-is} (number 139 in The Strong's Greek Concordance), and is four times translated heresy or heresies in New Testament scripture. Commonly this word *hairesis* {hah'-ee-res-is} points to a division formed between people because of their beliefs. Paul addressed this very subject in his first epistle that he wrote to the Corinthians, stating in 1 CORINTHIANS 11:18 *For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. 19 For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.* Here Paul was addressing the divisions in opinions there was among the Corinthian Saints in observing the Lord's Supper. Some seen this as an opportunity to feed themselves, and failed to see the importance of remembering the Lord Jesus Christ's death until He returns. Such heresies show how a self willed opinion is substituted for submission to the power of the truth. {Study 1 CORINTHIANS 11.} Paul addressed this same thought in ROMANS 16:17 & 18 where he wrote: *Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. 18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.* The point we want to note here in ACTS 28:22 is that the chief Jews of Rome knew that Paul was a Christian, and had beliefs different than theirs. But elsewhere in ACTS we find that the Jews themselves had sects in their assemblies. In ACTS 5:17 we find there was "the sect of the Sadducees," whose claim to fame according to ACTS 23:8 is that they *"...say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit..."* In ACTS 15:5 we read of a *"certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed."* They caused a division among the Christians on whether or not it was necessary to be circumcised according to the law of Moses in order to be saved. The sect of the Pharisees in the Sanhedrin had a division in their thinking amongst the

Sadducees in that they confess a belief in a resurrection, and in angels, and in spirits. {Study ACTS 23:8.} Then we have previously studied about the accusation of Tertullus before governor Felix that Paul was *...a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes...* ACTS 24:5. Tertullus here used a slang term for "Christian" to describe Paul by stating Paul was a "Nazarene." A "Nazarene" as used here in scorn, identified Paul as being a follower of Jesus of Nazareth. Tertullus knew that his use of the term *...the sect of the Nazarenes...* would be viewed as a heresy, meaning of a belief opposed to the religious orthodox doctrines of the Jews. Paul himself addressed this charge in ACTS 24:14 & 15 when he stated: *But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: 15 And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.*

The last part of these Jews of Rome statement is one that Paul himself had reckoned with real well: *...concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against.* Before Paul was saved, remember that at Jerusalem there was a great persecution against the church, against the Christians, and Paul, then known as Saul of Tarsus *...made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison....* ACTS 8:1 & 3. In ACTS 9:1 he breathed *....out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord,...* . Stated another way, before Paul was saved, he himself had spoken against the sect of the Nazarene's, so now here at Rome Paul knew exactly the reasoning behind what theses chief Jews of Rome were saying when they stated: *...as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against.* ACTS 9:2 goes on to record that Saul of Tarsus *...desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.* In ACTS 22:4 Paul goes on to state that not only did he bring bound unto Jerusalem both men and women, but that he *...persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.* Persecuting unto the death violates the law of Moses, which law the Pharisee's themselves claim to follow. The law of Moses plainly stated in EXODUS 20:13 *Thou shalt not kill,...* yet as a supposedly law keeping Pharisee in the name of tradition, Paul, as Saul of Tarsus, violated the law of Moses! Before King Agrippa Paul explained his actions before he got saved like this: ACTS 26:9 *I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10 Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. 11 And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.* To the GALATIANS Paul wrote this of his actions: chapter 1:13 *For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: 14 And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.* In 1 CORINTHIANS 15:9 Paul once again noted: *For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.* Paul's actions against Christians before he got saved, and their telling him of Jesus, and His love, is a large part of what pricked Paul's conscience. Thus when Jesus arrested him on the road to Damascus, Paul, as Saul of Tarsus, knew exactly who it was that spoke to him, saying: *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks...* meaning: "it is hard for you to go against the constant pricking of your own conscience." {Study again ACTS 9:5, and 26:14.} Words can never adequately express how thankful Paul always was for his salvation, having experience first hand the exceeding great grace, and love, and mercy that Jesus Christ bestowed upon him while he was yet a sinner! The same should be said from all of us who have experienced His great salvation! Late in his life Paul wrote to Timothy about this experience, recalling to him some points he no doubt went over hundreds of times before with Timothy, stating in 1 TIMOTHY 1:12 *And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; 13 Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. 14 And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. 15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world*

to save sinners; of whom I am chief. 16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

Bring your thoughts now back to Paul in Rome, as he dealt with the chief Jews of Rome when they said: *...for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against.* Yes, Paul could identify with their thinking, and had dealt with this kind of attitude every where he had went since he got saved on the road to Damascus. Yet every where Paul went since becoming a Christian, his focus, and his heart's desire toward the Jew, his brethren by birth, was always the same as he had expressed in his ROMANS epistle. ROMANS 10:1 *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.* In fact Paul was ready, and willing to expound his doctrine at this current meeting here in Rome, however knowing that Paul wasn't really going anywhere anytime soon, the Jewish leadership here at Rome put him off until a later date. As we stated above, they only sort of wanted to hear what Paul had to say, *...someday, not today, not now.* They had now seen that Paul wouldn't be an interference to their businesses, so at a more convenient time for them they thought it would be good to hear of Paul's doctrine. It is not wise to play Russian roulette with one's own soul, yet this is exactly what those religious, yet unsaved Jewish business men of Rome were doing here. Paul quoted from ISAIAH 49:8 when he wrote in 2 CORINTHIANS 6:2 that *....behold, now is the day of salvation,...* and Paul could have reminded these Jewish business men of this fact, though there is no record of this happening here. These chief Jews of Rome still did have a real desire to hear what Paul had to say, thus we read in ACTS 28:23 *And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening.*

Here is where Paul can get down to more of the business that the Lord had told him about back in ACTS 23:11, a scripture we have referenced many times before, where Jesus told Paul in the quiet hour of midnight *...Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.* Now in Rome some years later, the chief Jews of Rome had appointed Paul a day, or had they? We just have seen in ACTS 23:11 that it really was Jesus who had appointed this day with the chief Jews of Rome. This word "appointed" in ACTS 28:23 comes from the Greek word "tasso," (number 5021 in The Strong's Greek Concordance), which is found eight times in the New Testament, and has come across our path before when we studied ACTS 22:10. {See again pages 39, and 215 of these notes.} Here the word "appointed" shows that Jesus arranged, or placed in order this meeting; thus the reality is that the Lord had even foreordained this meeting before the world began! So realize when our scripture here says: *"And when they had appointed him a day,..."* that this meeting had been arranged long before the day spoken of here in ACTS 28:23.

And what a meeting it was, for Paul *...expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening.* This was an all day meeting, *...from morning till evening.* We will discuss the context of this all day meeting shortly, but for now consider the length of this meeting *...from morning till evening.* We have been to some fellowship meetings that started in the morning, and ended in the evening, but there were several different speakers during the course of the day. Here in ACTS 28:23 we find one speaker, the Apostle Paul. Think about that for a minute, listening to one preacher *...from morning till evening.* But Paul was no ordinary preacher, for he was an ordained Apostle of Jesus Christ, who was appointed this office by Jesus Christ Himself! For a moment or two let's consider the manner of Paul's preaching, and then begin to appreciate a little of how he could speak *...from morning till evening...* holding a listening audience captive for that long.

The first record we have of Paul preaching is in ACTS 9:20 shortly after he was saved, while still in Damascus *...he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.* These were not long winded sermons, but the subject of his preaching always was Christ, *...that he is the Son of God.* A pattern sermon that Paul preached in the synagogues once he began his missionary journeys is found in ACTS 13:15-41. We studied this sermon in depth earlier in this study, and we won't be covering it here

either. {Review the chapter starting on page 134 of these notes.} My point in even mentioning Paul's pattern sermon preached at Antioch in Pisidia is to note that it wasn't an all day sermon, but rather an expounding of how *...he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God....* ACTS 9:20. Unto the Gentiles Paul continued to preach Christ, that He is the Son of God; he preached the gospel of Christ (ROMANS 15:19 and 2 CORINTHIANS 10:14); he preached the word of the Lord (ACTS 15:35); he preached by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost as noted in 1 CORINTHIANS 2:4 *And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power...* . In ROMANS 16:25 we find that Paul was *...preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began...* . In 1 CORINTHIANS 1:21 we find Paul telling us that *...it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.* in ACTS 20:9 we find that Paul was long in preaching, and even after Eutychus fell out of the window, Paul *...talked a long while, even till break of day...* ACTS 20:11. So we note that Paul could preach a long sermon. In ACTS 20:25; 28:23 and 28:31 we find that Paul was *...preaching the kingdom of God...* . In 1 CORINTHIANS 1:18 we find that Paul was *...preaching of the cross...* . In 2 CORINTHIANS 11:7 we find that Paul *...preached to you the gospel of God freely...* . In short, Paul preached the word, and was instant in season, and out of season; exhorted with all longsuffering and doctrine as he also encouraged Timothy to do in 2 TIMOTHY 4:2. As we have seen in this study, Paul preached to the Jew, the Greek, the Roman, the Gentile, the heathen, the ignorant, the unbelieving, the learned and the unlearned; he preached unto the free, and the prisoner alike; he preached to the common folk, to the magistrates, to commanders, to governors, and even to kings. He could keep his sermons short, or he could be long winded. He could preach all day, and he could preach all night. Now here at Rome, at long last Paul will get his long awaited opportunity to speak to the Jews at Rome, and he will do so *...from morning till evening...* without running out of subject material, for Paul always preached and persuaded *...concerning Jesus.*

ACTS 28:23 *And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening.*

Let's now zero in on some thoughts found in the middle of this verse, which help answer the question of how Paul was able to preach, and expound, and teach, and testify to these chief Jews of Rome *...from morning till evening...* without running out of subject material. Paul's resources noted here were "the law of Moses," and "the prophets," or simply put, Paul expounded to the chief Jews of Rome from Old Testament scripture. Old Testament scripture was basically all that Paul had to go on at this point in time. The epistles Paul had already written were not yet part of our New Testament scripture, even though his written words were inspired by the Holy Ghost. Recall that Paul had been taught Old Testament scripture ever since early childhood. Then as a teenager Paul learned more of the law *...at the feet of Gamaliel...* ACTS 22:3. Paul even references the law of Moses more than a hundred and twenty times in scripture. "The law of Moses" incorporates the first five books of the Old Testament. "The prophets" takes in most of the rest of the Old Testament, excluding the PSALMS. So we see that the Apostle Paul had as his guide, as his reference material, the Old Testament, from which he was able to expound upon *...from morning till evening.*

Now consider this. We are not told if Paul had a written copy of Old Testament scripture, or not. If he previously had a written copy of the law, and the prophets, it was probably lost at sea during the ship wreck of ACTS 27. But in Paul's early years of education he had learned, and memorized pages of Old Testament scripture. The Psalmist wrote in PSALMS 119:11 *Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.* Paul's Old Testament scripture was hid in his heart too. The Holy Ghost brought the Old Testament words to Paul's memory when he needed to, thus we see how the Lord used Paul's early education as an asset to him later in life. For example, when Paul was brought before the Jewish Sanhedrin back in ACTS 23, we find Paul quoting Old Testament scripture after they had smitten him on the mouth. Let's quickly review: ACTS 23:1 *And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day. 2 And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. 3 Then said Paul unto*

him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law? 4 And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest? 5 Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people. Paul here instantly quoted from EXODUS 22:28. The point we are noting here is that Old Testament scripture was what Paul knew from his youth, and he had hid these words in his heart just like the Psalmist did. Few men ever had the knowledge of the law, and the writings of the prophets as Paul did. The Lord used Paul's Old Testament knowledge as the building blocks upon which Paul's New Testament gospel record is founded. Of course the foundation upon which Paul's gospel is built is none other than Jesus Christ Himself. 1 CORINTHIANS 3:11 *For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* Paul expressed it like this in GALATIANS 1:11 & 12 -- *But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. 12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

Let's think about these verses in GALATIANS 1 for a minute or two, focusing upon the word "revelation" found in GALATIANS 1:12. "Revelation" here means an appearing by the Lord Jesus Christ for the purpose "to lighten;" to make a disclosure of truth, and give instruction concerning things before unknown. Recall in LUKE 2:32 when Mary and Joseph brought infant Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem, that there was a just and devout man named Simeon, whom the Holy Ghost came upon, and it was revealed unto him who Jesus was, then in verse 32 we read that he prophesied this of Jesus: *A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.* Jesus fulfilled His ministry while here on earth being the Light of the world, and ...*A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel...* as foretold by Simeon. Then on the road to Damascus Jesus shed His Light upon Saul of Tarsus for the very same purpose, to further spread ...*light to lighten the Gentiles...* . How much Light did Saul of Tarsus take in on the road to Damascus? He got a full dose of the true Light of Jesus Christ, which was brighter than the noon day sun, and this Light instantly blinded Saul of Tarsus' physical eyes, and instantly opened his spiritual eyes to clearly see a disclosure of grace and truth, and realize it was the Lord Jesus Christ that was revealing Himself to this law abiding Pharisee, as Jesus spoke: "Saul, Saul why persecutest thou me?" "Who art thou?" Saul quickly answers, as his mind registers the fact that it could only be the Lord Jesus Christ Himself speaking to him here. An incredible miracle then took place. This second generation law abiding Pharisee instantly believed, and accepted Jesus as his own personal Saviour when he cried out in faith believing: "Lord!!!" Jesus knew old Saul of Tarsus heart, that he meant "Lord save me," and He did. A lot of important life changing things took place during that short period of time when Saul of Tarsus saw that Light brighter than the noon day sun while on the road to Damascus. It took Paul about twenty-five years before he could repeat all that Jesus told him that day on the road to Damascus. And when Paul did talk about his enlightening experience, he was before a king, testifying to Agrippa some things about the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, and what he himself had first witnessed on the road to Damascus. ACTS 26:15-18 is again where we find these words that record what the True Light of the world told Paul. ACTS 26:15 *And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. 16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; 17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.*

You talk about a life changing revelation: an appearing by the Lord Jesus Christ for the purpose "to lighten;" to make a disclosure of truth, and give instruction concerning things before unknown, here it is! Saul of Tarsus was never the same from that day forward. Praise the Lord! In these few words Jesus had told Saul of Tarsus that He was indeed Jesus, whom Paul had persecuted. That He was the Holy One of Israel, the Just One whom Stephen had preached about! That He was in the beginning with God, that all things were made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was

made; that all things were created by him, and for Him, and by Him all things consist! {Study JOHN 1:1-3, and COLOSSIANS 1:16-18.} In this brightness of His glory Jesus had revealed to Saul of Tarsus that He was the "I AM" he had dutifully studied about in the Old Testament since his youth. Now having realized who it was that speaking, Saul of Tarsus heard Jesus tell him that He was going to make him a minister, and a witness, and an Apostle unto the Gentiles! That his message would be one that would open eyes, and turn people from darkness unto light; from the power of Satan unto God; so that they too could receive forgiveness of sins, but more importantly, grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Him, to the point that they may have the eyes of their understanding also enlightened; and to know about My high calling, and what the riches of the glory of My inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. {Study 2 PETER 3:18, and EPHESIANS 1:18.} No wonder it took so many years for Paul to be able to tell what Jesus had revealed unto him on the road to Damascus. It took Paul time, really a lifetime, for the magnitude of all Jesus had told him on the road to Damascus to sink in. It also took the power of the Holy Ghost to guide Paul into all of the truth that was to be yet revealed unto him. {Study JOHN 16:13.} Yes, Paul got a full dose of the Light of Jesus on the road to Damascus; too much Light for one soul to take in at one time in a human body, yet enough Light to cause Paul a career change, and a life long pursuit, of which Paul wrote of late in life, stating that he wanted to *...be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus....* PHILIPPIANS 3:9-12. One more thing Jesus made known unto Saul of Tarsus, our Apostle Paul, recorded in ACTS 26:16 above, and that was the fact that this wasn't going to be the last time He would appear unto Paul, for He said that there would be further revealed *...those things in the which I will appear unto thee... .* In the end, the revelation that Jesus Christ gave unto Paul is Paul's gospel. Again Paul wrote in ROMANS 2:16 *...God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.* COLOSSIANS 1:25 tells us: *Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil* (to fill up, i.e. to fill to the full; to fill to the top: so that nothing shall be wanting to full measure, fill to the brim; to render full, i.e. to complete) *the word of God;... .*

Before moving on, ask yourself, "How much light of the word of God have I taken in? How much light of Paul's gospel have I allowed in my life?" We will begin to see more of the importance of knowing the answers to these questions as we move on.

Having now explained a little more about the word "revelation" in GALATIANS 1:12, let's read again GALATIANS 1:11 & 12 -- *But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. 12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. ...15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, 16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen;...*

This word "reveal" in verse 16 has an exceeding amount of depth to it, let me explain. The Greek word apokalupto {ap-ok-al-oo'-to}, (number 601 in The Strong's Greek Concordance) is translated "reveal" here in GALATIANS 1:16, and it means: to uncover, lay open what has been veiled or covered up; disclose, make bare; to make known, make manifest, disclose what before was unknown. Isn't this exactly what light does? To make know that which has been veiled in darkness, and was before unseen, and unknown. Would you rather look at something in color, or in black and white? At night, without light, we see things in black and white, or shades of gray. Go outside on a dark night, without any artificial light, and tell me what color the leaves in a tree are, or the color of the brick on a house. You might think the leaves are green, or the bricks red, but add bright sunshine and you find the leaves on the tree were brilliant red, and the bricks on the house were a blonde color. It was the light that revealed the true colors to you. Interestingly the Greek word apokalupto {ap-ok-al-oo'-to} starts with the Greek letter alpha, and ends with the Greek letter omega. The significance of this is found four times in REVELATION where Jesus speaks: 1:8 *I am Alpha and Omega, the*

beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. 1:11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last:.. . 21:6 ...I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. 22:13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Brother Hill once preached a sermon about this noting that when Jesus says He is "Alpha and Omega," He is really saying: "I am the first letter of the alphabet, and I am the last letter of the alphabet, and every letter in between. I am the first number, and the last number, and everything in between." Every word, every note, every letter, every book, every document that was ever written, should all remind us of Jesus. He is every letter in The Word of God. He is The Word of God.

Another Greek word that starts with the Greek letter alpha, and ends with the Greek letter omega, is *anaggello* {an-ang-el'-lo}, (number 312 in The Strong's Greek Concordance), and is akin in meaning to reveal above in that it means: to announce, make known, to report, bring back tidings, to rehearse. *Anaggello* {an-ang-el'-lo} translates to the following words in our King James version of the Bible as: tell, show, declare, rehearse, speak, and report. We need to see it here in the context of shedding Light on a subject. To make know that which has been veiled in darkness, and was before unseen, and unknown. To see in color in other words. *Anaggello* {an-ang-el'-lo} is found three times in the following verses found in JOHN 16, which are words spoken by Jesus, the "Alpha and Omega" Himself. *Anaggello* {an-ang-el'-lo} is found as "shew" in the following verses: JOHN 16:13 *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew <312> you things to come. 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew <312> it unto you. 15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew <312> it unto you.*

GALATIANS 1:11 *But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. 12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. ...15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, 16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen;...*

I paraphrased what Paul wrote here like this in my own words: *I Paul have a certificate of the Lord stating that the gospel which I preach is not something that I learned from man, even though I had some wonderful teachers. Rather the gospel which I preach came to me directly by Jesus Christ Himself, who appeared unto me several different times at several different places, and revealed this gospel unto me.* Jesus took what Paul had learned from his youth, the Old Testament scriptures, the law of Moses, the prophets, the Psalms, and with a little of His Light at a time, revealed unto Paul what we know as Paul's gospel. Let us not pass over this thought lightly either. Consider, what does the word "gospel" incorporate? The word "gospel" as used here in GALATIANS 1:11 means: good tidings; or glad tidings, and speaks specifically to the good tidings of the kingdom of God, and of the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ. The word "gospel" is not found in the Old Testament! Why? Partly because the Old Testament amplifies the law. The New Testament magnifies the good news that grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ, and the finished work of salvation that He completed upon the cross. Paul wrote in ROMANS 10:4 *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.* I suppose if one sentence could sum up New Testament gospel, ROMANS 10:4 would be one candidate for such a task. But then so many other New Testament scriptures would fill the bill also, like 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.* These two scriptures come from Paul's gospel. So does ROMANS 1:16 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.* Two authors of scripture mention the gospel of Christ, or the gospel of Jesus Christ: the Apostle Paul (eleven times), and Mark once, (John Mark) the author of the gospel according to MARK. {See MARK 1:1.} Two authors of scripture mention the gospel of God: The Apostle Paul six times, and The Apostle Peter once. Again Paul wrote in

GALATIANS 1:11 *But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. 12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.* We are emphasizing here the importance of knowing Paul's gospel, which the Lord Jesus Christ Himself gave Paul to complete the word of God as we noted above in COLOSSIANS 1:25 *Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil* (to fill up, i.e. to fill to the full; to fill to the top: so that nothing shall be wanting to full measure, fill to the brim; to render full, i.e. to complete) *the word of God;...* . As we also previously noted some of why we need to know Paul's gospel is found in ROMANS 2:16 *...God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.* May Paul's gospel not be a secret hidden from you.

Paul didn't receive all of his gospel in that blast of Light he received on the road to Damascus, though the foundational principles of his gospel record are found in the first Light Jesus revealed unto Paul in that statement found in ACTS 26:16-18. It took the power of the Holy Ghost, and the revelation of Jesus Christ Himself to open the Old Testament scriptures unto Paul, just as He did to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus in LUKE 24:13-35. There in LUKE 24:27 we find Jesus *...beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.* After Jesus revealed Himself unto these two disciples on the way to Emmaus, He vanished, leaving them saying *...one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?* {LUKE 24:32.} How do you suppose Paul felt after his enlightening experience on the road to Damascus? Didn't his heart too burn within him as he considered The Word of God that was revealed unto him that day? That burning passion for Christ never left him from that day forward! Study ACTS 9:11 and you will see that Paul, (then known as Saul of Tarsus), spent the next three days praying. In time Paul wrote down what the Holy Ghost inspired him to write in what we now have in our New Testament scripture of Paul's gospel. And there is a tremendous amount of that Light revealed unto Paul found in his gospel record. The majority of Christians fail to see what is really stated in Paul's gospel. Again ask yourself: "How much light of the word of God have I taken in? How much light of Paul's gospel have I allowed in my life?" Again ROMANS 2:16 referenced above tells of *...the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.* How much Light of Paul's gospel has been revealed unto your own heart? Concerning this topic, Brother Copley wrote: "We see things that the majority of Christians do not see. God has not revealed it to them. Often they are to blame, because when He has revealed light to them they refuse to walk in it. If He gives you a ray of light today and you turn away from it, you probably will not get another ray of light tomorrow; because each ray of light prepares for another step." {End of quote from Brother Copley.}

Now ask yourself this question also, "Who was Paul's gospel written to?" Well he did write unto the Saints at Rome, and to the Saints at Ephesus, and at Corinth, and at Philippi, Colosse and Thessalonica, and regions like Galatia. He even wrote letters address unto individuals such as Titus, Philemon, and Timothy, and to a group of Jews he anonymously pens a letter called HEBREWS. But did Paul write a letter to you? Paul's gospel, all of the above mentioned letters and epistles, are written to you. 2 TIMOTHY 3:16 *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.* Paul's gospel is part of the "all scripture" referenced here. Again we repeat what we noted from COLOSSIANS 1:25 above: *Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil* (to fill up, i.e. to fill to the full; to fill to the top: so that nothing shall be wanting to full measure, fill to the brim; to render full, i.e. to complete) *the word of God;...* . In 2 CORINTHIANS 4 Paul writes: 3 *But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. 5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. 6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.* Thus we see that Jesus didn't just make a cameo appearance unto Paul on the road

to Damascus to scare the living daylights out of him, but rather brighter than the noon day sun He appeared unto Paul, and as Paul put it here: *...shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

So we see that Paul's gospel was written me and you, and here are some of the reasons why. ROMANS 16:25 *Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, 26 But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: 27 To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.* Again in EPHESIANS 3 Paul wrote some more of the ministry Jesus Christ had given him upon that road to Damascus. EPHESIANS 3:1 *For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, 2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: 3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, 4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) 5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; 6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: 7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.*

In these last two portions of scripture from ROMANS 16, and EPHESIANS 3 we find more of what Paul's gospel record contains, and find that he mentions about "the mystery" his gospel record reveals. Paul's gospel teaches of seven mysteries not found in other scriptural records, which are: (1) the mystery of Israel's blindness, (ROMANS 11:25); (2) the hidden mystery, (ROMANS 16:25; 1 CORINTHIANS 2:7; COLOSSIANS 1:26, and EPHESIANS 1:9); (3) the mystery of translation, (1 CORINTHIANS 15:51-53 and 1 THESSALONIANS 4:15-17); (4) the great mystery of the bride, which unfortunately remains a great mystery in most churches today simply because they do not have the Holy Ghost to teach them the truth, and if they do they fail to see Paul's doctrine of ranks in the resurrection, (1 CORINTHIANS 15:23, and EPHESIANS 5:32); (5) the mystery of Godliness, (COLOSSIANS 2:2 and 1 TIMOTHY 3:16); (6) the mystery of iniquity, (2 THESSALONIANS 2:7); and (7) the mystery of faith, (1 TIMOTHY 3:9).

The mystery of EPHESIANS 3:6 *...That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel...* has a depth to it that incorporates the other mysteries revealed unto Paul, which very few Christians ever grasp, or ever see, mainly because their pastors and teachers don't know, and haven't been properly taught what it means to be fellowheirs with Christ. Remember the Greek word sunkleronomos, sometimes written as sugkleronomos {soong-klay-ron-om'-os}? Sugkleronomos elevates the word inheritance to it's highest levels. Sugkleronomos {soong-klay-ron-om'-os} is number 4789 in the Strong's Greek Concordance, and is only used four times in scripture. Sugkleronomos translates to "heirs with him" in HEBREWS 11:9; "heirs together" in 1 PETER 3:7; "fellowheirs" in EPHESIANS 3:6, and "joint-heirs with Christ" in ROMANS 8:17. All believers won't be "joint-heirs with Christ" even though this provision is made for them during this church age. The most profound, and complete meaning of the Greek word sugkleronomos, which is joint-heir, or co-inheritor as of a wife with her husband! Our thinking here is in the light of eternity. There will be a Bride of Christ, who will have made herself ready by yielding unto Him while running her race course here on earth. This ultimately is the high calling of God in Christ Jesus that was given Paul to teach unto the Gentiles about their *...inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me...* (ACTS 26:18), which subject was initially unfolded unto him while on the road to Damascus. Again most Christians even today still don't the depths of what we are showing here *...That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel...* which actually speaks of an elite group of sugkleronomos Saints collectively known as the Bride of Christ, the full overcomers. *That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel...* has a depth to it that incorporates the other mysteries revealed unto Paul, which very few Christians

ever grasp, or ever see, mainly because their pastors and teachers don't know, and haven't been properly taught what it means to be fellowheirs, and a joint-partaker with Christ, which is exactly what the word "partaker" expresses in EPHESIANS 3:6. For example, how many Christians believe in ranks in the resurrection? God only knows the answer to such a question, of course, but most Christians (if you ask them) believe that the whole church is the Bride of Christ. Yet 1 CORINTHIANS 15:22 & 23 reads: *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. 23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.* {Review pages 810-812 of these notes.} Thus it remains a mystery to the majority of Christians that only a very small rib portion from the church will be in that company of Saints known as the Bride of Christ. Paul teaches in 1 CORINTHIANS 15:45 *The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.* The last Adam is a reference to Christ. ROMANS 5:14 further tells that Adam *...is the figure of him that was to come.* Again *"...him that was to come..."* references Christ. GENESIS 2:21 & 22 records: *And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; 22 And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.* Eve was her name, and she became Adam's wife. During this mysterious church age in which we are still living, the church, the collective body of Christ, (EPHESIANS 5:30 *For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.*); this body of believers, like Adam in GENESIS 2, has fallen into a deep sleep, yet a rib portion remains awake, and is being built into that choice company of tried Saints that will forever be known as The Lamb's wife, The Bride of Christ!! This actually is the "great mystery" Paul speaks about in EPHESIANS 5:30-33, noting in verse 32 *This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.* To Bridal Saints Paul writes in 1 THESSALONIANS 5:6 *Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.* This is written to Christians of this church age. Sinners are dead in trespasses and sins according to EPHESIANS 2:1, and thus are not asleep. The Bridal Saints are watching for His soon appearing, and know the facts of another mystery revealed unto the Apostle Paul, that being the mystery of final change, also called the exit mystery, talked about in 1 CORINTHIANS 15:51 *Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

Yes this is a tremendous amount of light that was revealed unto the Apostle Paul, which revelation really began when Jesus first appeared unto Paul as the Light greater than the noon day sun on the road to Damascus. Paul also knew that he was to share the Light he had received, and knowing the importance of this, Paul prayed in EPHESIANS 1:17 *That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: 18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,...* In these words of Paul's prayer we find the key that unlocks understanding concerning *...the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,...* of how *...the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel...* (ROMANS 16:25 and EPHESIANS 3:6 also quoted above). This very same key unlocks understanding into Paul's view of the kingdom of God, for in our text of ACTS 28:23 Paul was able to expound and testify from morning until evening the kingdom of God. (On your own try writing an essay on "the kingdom of God," and realize this is a large subject.) This was a large subject for Paul to cover too, for we find in ACTS 28:31 two years later Paul was still *...Preaching the kingdom of God,...* Before we dive into the subject of "the kingdom of God," realize that Paul got a glimpse of "the kingdom of God" first hand on the road to Damascus. On that day Paul got a "heavenly vision" which he told King Agrippa about in ACTS 26:19. Also on that day on the road to Damascus Paul got a revelation of Jesus Christ, and his own eyes were spiritually enlightened! He also was told some things about an inheritance among the Saints, which took the power of the Holy Ghost, and some more

...revelation in the knowledge of... our Lord Jesus Christ... for Paul to be able to preach about ...the hope of his calling, and... what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,... . Four times in EPHESIANS, and in no other book of the Bible, we find the phrase "heavenly places" meaning in the heavenlies. No wonder that Brother Hill noted the epistle of EPHESIANS to be the high water mark in the Bible. He wrote in his Bible: "The book of EPHESIANS gives us the loftiest levels of teaching found in the Bible... ." {End of Brother Hill quote.} Yes Paul got a "heavenly vision" first on the road to Damascus, and spent the rest of his life learning, and then teaching about the high calling of God found in Christ Jesus, with his eyes fixed upon winning the heavenly prize. (Study PHILIPPIANS 3:14.) On his race course the Apostle Paul was given more ...visions and revelations of the Lord... 2 CORINTHIANS 12:1. Thus his focus was a heavenly focus, and his vision was a heavenly vision. Paul's perspective of "the kingdom of God" then must be reckoned to be a heavenly perspective. Keep this point in mind as we proceed.

ACTS 28:23 *And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening.* Note this portion of verse 23, that Paul ...expounded and testified the kingdom of God,... and in one sense the subject of "the kingdom of God" was a familiar subject to all the Jews who attended sabbath day services, yet their perspective was different than what the Apostle Paul was now presenting to them. Several scriptures bare out the fact the perspective of "the kingdom of God" to the Jew, and to a majority of Christians, is an earthly perspective, not the heavenly perspective Paul taught. And it would take from morning until evening for Paul to try and make them see his view point, which was why he was ...persuading them concerning Jesus... in the first place.

Paul's audience here in ACTS 28:23 was the chief Jews of Rome, all of whom would have known the Old Testament scriptures from which Paul here was teaching them. We are not told where in the Old Testament Paul began to expound unto them "the kingdom of God," however we know that the teaching of there being a kingdom established upon the throne of David for ever would have been one place where Paul may have started his persuasive arguments. In fact under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, Peter on the day of Pentecost made persuasive arguments concerning David, and preached to the Jews in attendance that day, saying ...Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;... ACTS 2:29 & 30. That day about three thousand accepted Jesus Christ as their Saviour! Under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, Paul in ACTS 13 preached a sermon in a Jewish synagogue in Antioch in Pisidia, and said: ...he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will. Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus... verses 22 and 23.

So we note that references to King David would be well received, and understood by all Jews. Perhaps here at Rome Paul referenced David from the following portion of scripture found in 2 SAMUEL 7.

2 SAMUEL 7:4 *And it came to pass that night, that the word of the LORD came unto Nathan, saying, 5 Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the LORD, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in? 6 Whereas I have not dwelt in any house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle. 7 In all the places wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not me an house of cedar? 8 Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel: 9 And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth. 10 Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the*

children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime, 11 And as since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the LORD telleth thee that he will make thee an house. 12 And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. 14 I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: 15 But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. 16 And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever. 17 According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.

18 Then went king David in, and sat before the LORD, and he said, Who am I, C Lord GOD? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? 19 And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, C Lord GOD; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of man, C Lord GOD? 20 And what can David say more unto thee? for thou, Lord GOD, knowest thy servant. 21 For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know them. 22 Wherefore thou art great, C LORD God: for there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears. 23 And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods? 24 For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever: and thou, LORD, art become their God. 25 And now, C LORD God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said. 26 And let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, The LORD of hosts is the God over Israel: and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee. 27 For thou, C LORD of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee. 28 And now, C Lord GOD, thou art that God, and thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant: 29 Therefore now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee: for thou, C Lord GOD, hast spoken it: and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever.

Here we find several times mentioned how God through the line of David would establish His kingdom for ever. Some where along the way on that long day of expounding scriptures in ACTS 28:23 Paul may have referenced ISAIAH 9:6 & 7 -- For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

After explaining these two portions of scripture, Paul then could have expounded from the book of DANIEL some of his prophecies. We will look at two portions of DANIEL, which references a time in the not to distant future. DANIEL 2:44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. This too is a reference to "the kingdom of God," and speaks of the time when the Gentile rulers, which have ruled since 606 B.C. will be replaced by rulership of Christ. DANIEL 7:13 & 14 adds the following account: I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. 14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

I will let you on your own pursue further study these, and other Old Testament references to "the kingdom of God," and we all should now see how "the kingdom of God" can be viewed from an earthly perspective, especially if you were a Jew brought up under the tutorship of Old Testament scripture. Keep in mind that Paul taught, and viewed "the kingdom of God" from a heavenly perspective, which the Lord Jesus Christ Himself began to reveal unto Paul on the road to Damascus, and that there will be those who will be joint-heirs with Christ, ruling and reigning in His Kingdom with Him, which are those four living ones in the midst of the throne. {Study ROMANS 8:17; 2 TIMOTHY 2:12; and REVELATION 4.}

Keeping in mind the above scriptures we referenced from 2 SAMUEL 7, ISAIAH 9, and DANIEL 2 and 7, let's spend a little time in the book of ACTS noting how the Holy Ghost inspired Luke to expound the doctrine of "the kingdom of God" in a spiritually perfect way. Seven times in the book of ACTS we find the phrase "the kingdom of God," and the number seven points to SPIRITUAL PERFECTION, or SPIRITUAL COMPLETION. Bridal Saints attain SPIRITUAL PERFECTION by following the guide lines found in Paul's gospel; by following Paul as he followed Christ. PHILIPPIANS 3:17 *Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.* The principles of Paul's gospel are really introduced to us in the book of ACTS, and then expounded upon in Paul's letters and epistles. The Holy Ghost inspired Luke to pen the book of ACTS using the phrase "the kingdom of God" like book ends to open and close Luke's discourse to C Theophilus. Brother Copley too noted this fact, and wrote a wonderful summation about "the kingdom of God" at the conclusion of his ACTS study book, which was recently reprinted in the July 2012 issue of the Grace and Glory magazine, and entitled "The Gospel of the Kingdom or The Gospel of the Glory."

To better understand the subject of "the kingdom of God" as developed in the book of ACTS, we need to be aware of what Brother Copley terms the "two grand divisions" found within these 28 chapters. The first twelve chapters centers mainly around Peter, a kingdom Apostle, and pertains to things of "the kingdom of God" significant to Israel. The last sixteen chapters centers around Paul, a church Apostle, and tells how he became the Apostle of the Gentiles. These chapters also cover the introduction of this yet present church age, and expounds the gospel of the grace of God, and how the word of His grace is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified by faith that is in Christ Jesus. {Study ACTS 20:18-35, and ACTS 26:16-18.}

Jesus preached "the kingdom of God," as noted in several scriptures, one of which is MARK 1:14 *Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,...* . This continued after His resurrection as noted in ACTS 1:1-3 *The former treatise have I made, C Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, 2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: 3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:...* . The Jews understood Jesus message concerning "the kingdom of God," but their view was from an earthly perspective, primarily because this is what they had been taught from Old Testament scriptures, some of which we went over above. Brother Copley noted that their line of thinking was along the lines of "the kingdom of God on earth, (Christ's reign with Israel over the nations)."

The Davidic Covenant expresses this, and is summarized in 1 CHRONICLES 17:7 *Now therefore thus shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, even from following the sheep, that thou shouldest be ruler over my people Israel: 8 And I have been with thee whithersoever thou hast walked, and have cut off all thine enemies from before thee, and have made thee a name like the name of the great men that are in the earth. 9 Also I will ordain a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, and they shall dwell in their place, and shall be moved no more; neither shall the children of wickedness waste them any more, as at the beginning, 10 And since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel. Moreover I will subdue all thine enemies. Furthermore I tell thee that the LORD will build thee an house. 11 And it shall come to pass, when thy days be expired that thou*

must go to be with thy fathers, that I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons; and I will establish his kingdom. 12 He shall build me an house, and I will stablish his throne for ever. 13 I will be his father, and he shall be my son: and I will not take my mercy away from him, as I took it from him that was before thee: 14 But I will settle him in mine house and in my kingdom for ever: and his throne shall be established for evermore. 15 According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.

Add to this a couple of accounts from MATTHEW. MATTHEW 19:27 Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? 28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Judging the twelve tribes of Israel where? In heaven, or upon the earth? Again we see an earthly perspective. MATTHEW 20:20 Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. 21 And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. She too made this request looking for the day when Christ would reign as King of Kings with Israel over the nations, which will occur during the Millennial Age, (study 1 CORINTHIANS 15:24 - 28).

In JOHN 18 & 19 we get another perspective from Pilate. JOHN 18:33 Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews? 34 Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? 35 Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? 36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. (The meaning here that Jesus was conveying unto Pilate here is that His Kingdom is not of this world, even though the perception of the Jews indicated that it was.) 37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. 38 Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all. Read the article in the April 2012 Grace and Glory magazine, and get a better perspective what Pilate meant in JOHN 19:19 And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. 20 This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. 21 Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. 22 Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.

Now with the above information fresh in our minds, we go back in ACTS 1, and continue with Jesus and His disciples. ACTS 1:3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: 4 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. 5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. 6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? 7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. 8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Note here that Jesus spent forty days "...speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God..." ACTS 1:3. Was Jesus expounding heavenly things, or earthly things? Obviously heavenly things, which they couldn't understand without having received the enlightening power of the Holy Ghost. Jesus was speaking here unto His followers,

His disciples, who already knew what Jesus had twice spoken unto Nicodemus in JOHN 3:3 & 5:*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*. However Jesus disciples were focused like most all men are, that being on what they can see, earthly things. They also knew the very same Old Testament doctrines we referenced above how that the kingdom of David would be established forever, and that Christ the Messiah would be their King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. They couldn't yet understand exactly what Jesus was teaching them concerning "the kingdom of God," and so they asked Him in verse 6 ...*Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?* Recall also what Jesus had told his disciples back in JOHN 16:12 & 13 -- *I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth:...* . Here in ACTS 1 Jesus was reminding them the importance of receiving the Holy Ghost, who would help them better understand His answers to their questions. And as Brother Copley noted in his summation concerning "the gospel of the kingdom:" after "the Holy Spirit was poured out, and a new age was introduced. Apparently it was the millennial age, which it would have been if Israel had received Jesus then as Messiah, ...but the Jewish nation rejected Christ; therefore, He had to postpone His coming to reign." {End of quoting Brother Copley, for now.} Mean while kingdom blessing were displayed for a period of time. Many were saved starting on the day of Pentecost after hearing Peter preach his first Holy Ghost inspired impromptu sermon. Peter referenced King David, and said in his sermon: *For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ...* ACTS 2:34-36.

In the days and months following Pentecost by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people, including the healing of manner of sickness and diseases among the people. By the time frame of ACTS 6 the number of believers had multiplied so much that the Kingdom Apostles sought help, and seven honest men full of the Holy Ghost were chosen to help in this ministry. Among them was Stephen, and Philip. Stephen in ACTS 7 preaches a sermon to the very same Sanhedrin council that brought Jesus before Pilate. Stephen too referenced King David, and made it known unto the Sanhedrin council that they were the betrayers and murderers of Jesus, their Messiah. They then stoned Stephen to death, but his testimony pricked the heart of one Saul of Tarsus. ACTS 8:1 & 4 tells us that there was then a great persecution against the church at Jerusalem, and they all were scattered abroad, and went every where preaching the word, except for the Apostles who still remained in Jerusalem. Philip, one of the seven chosen with Stephen, has his ministry highlighted in ACTS 8. His message learned from the Apostles is found in ACTS 8:12 where he is found ...*preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ,....* . This is the second time we find mentioned in the book of ACTS "the kingdom of God."

In ACTS 9 Saul of Tarsus gets saved after seeing for himself in the Light brighter than the noonday sun, the very same Jesus that Stephen had witnessed about back in ACTS 7. It seems that instantly Saul of Tarsus recognized Jesus as ...*the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords...* which he too had been taught about since a youth. After asking Jesus, "Who art thou?" Jesus answered and said: ...*I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me...* (ACTS 26:15-18). Contained in this short declaration was Saul of Tarsus' life sentence! In these few words Jesus really introduced Paul's gospel unto Saul of Tarsus. Down the road of life a short ways, Saul of Tarsus becomes the Apostle Paul, the Apostle sent unto the Gentiles to proclaim these doctrines first introduced unto him on the road to Damascus. Prior to this time in ACTS the good news gospel message of salvation was preached unto the Jews only, not unto the Gentiles. {Study ACTS 11:19.} Here in ACTS 9 Paul got a glimpse of "the kingdom of God" in this "heavenly vision" he

witnessed first hand on the road to Damascus, and spent the rest of his life learning, and then teaching about the high calling of God found in Christ Jesus, with his eyes fixed upon winning the heavenly prize. (Study PHILIPPIANS 3:14.) On his race course the Apostle Paul was given more *...visions and revelations of the Lord...* 2 CORINTHIANS 12:1. Thus his focus was a heavenly focus, and his vision was a heavenly vision. Paul's perspective of "the kingdom of God" then must be reckoned to be a heavenly perspective, not the earthly view point Paul studied about as a youth learning the Old Testament scriptures.

The final five mentions of "the kingdom of God" in the book of ACTS are all in association with the Apostle Paul. Five is the number pointing to GRACE, and Paul uses the word "grace" more than any other Holy Ghost inspired writer of scripture. Paul's gospel unfold the truths that are to be preached during this church age. Peter, and the other Kingdom Apostles got a glimpse of the gospel message Paul preached, but Paul's message to them included, as Peter put it in 2 PETER 3:12, *...some things hard to be understood,...*

ACTS 10 finds the Apostle Peter beyond the region of Jerusalem, preaching unto the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius. In verse 34 we find Peter preaching: *...Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:...* . In verses 44 and 45 we read: *While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. 45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.* Peter had to explain his actions to the Jews in Jerusalem in ACTS 11, where we also read that *...they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch,...* in Syria (verse 19). The word Antioch is found 19 times in scripture. Nineteen is the number of FAITH. Certainly the church at Antioch, Syria was a church of FAITH, and thus it is no wonder that we read in ACTS 11:26 that *...the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.* Antioch, Syria was at the time of ACTS the third largest city of the Roman Empire with a population at that time of 500,000. By the time frame of ACTS 13 we find Paul and Barnabas in Antioch, Syria preaching to believers from all over their known world. From this church in Antioch, Syria Paul and Barnabas then went out on their missionary journey, where literally hundreds, and thousands of Gentiles got saved, along with those Jews who listened, and believed. As they came to the end of this trial filled missionary journey we find that everywhere they went, they concluded their teaching *...Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God...* ACTS 14:22. This is the third time we find the phrase "the kingdom of God" in the book of ACTS, and the first time in connection with preaching unto the Gentiles.

Paul later expounds upon this doctrine in his epistles, writing in ROMANS 8:16 *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:* 17 *And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.* 18 *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.* We then see *....that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God....* is heavenly teaching, and even points to the opportunity we all have to be a joint-heir with Christ in "the kingdom of God." ROMANS 8:17 then explains degrees of heirship. ROMANS 8:17 *And if children, then heirs {kleronomos (2818)}; heirs {kleronomos (2818)} of God, and joint-heirs {sugkleronomos 4789} with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.* We see here that there are heirs, and that there are joint-heirs with Christ. A joint-heir is a fellow heir, a heir together, a heir with, or a joint participant with some other heir or heirs. In this case we are discussing joint-heirship with Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. HEBREWS 1:1 & 2 tells us that Jesus Christ has been appointed heir of all things by God. HEBREWS 1:1 *God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,* 2 *Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir {kleronomos (2818)} of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.* As spoken of here "heir of all things" doesn't leave out anything that is God's. In other words a

...joint-heir with Christ... will be someone who shares with Christ Jesus His heirship of all things appointed to Him by God, which doesn't leave out anything that is God's. This someone who shares with Christ Jesus His heirship of all things appointed to Him by God, called here in ROMANS 8:17 a *...joint-heir with Christ...* will actually be an elite group of sugkleronomos Saints collectively known as the Bride of Christ, the full overcomers. This makes sense once you realize that husbands and wives in normal healthy marriages share equally ownership of all their things. Since Jesus Christ has been *...appointed heir of all things...* His Bride will be joint-heir of all things. {Review pages 932-934 of these notes.}

The Kingdom Apostles didn't teach this doctrine, and continued to see "the kingdom of God" as it pertains to Israel, and Christ's reign with Israel over the nations that will take place during the Millennium. This became evident in ACTS 15 when Paul, and Barnabas, and Titus went down to Jerusalem after completing their missionary journey, and returning unto Antioch, Syria. At this time there had a lengthy discussion concerning the salvation of souls, and whether following the law of Moses was necessary in order for a Gentile to also get saved. After hearing Paul and Barnabas tell of their missionary journey, James, the pastor at Jerusalem, got up and said: *Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things....* ACTS 15:13-17. Here James acknowledged that the Gentiles would be a part of "the kingdom of God."

In ACTS 16-18 Paul goes on a second missionary journey, this time with Silas as his partner. Along the way both Timothy and Luke become a part of his ministry. During this journey Paul spends a year and a half in Corinth, and expounds his gospel message unto many, and makes acquaintance with Aquila, and Priscilla, who become established in Paul's gospel. Late in ACTS 18 Paul passes through Ephesus leaving Aquila and Priscilla there, and they establish a permanent residence in Ephesus. Paul returns to Antioch, Syria, stays there for a while, and then in ACTS 19 Paul begins a three year stint in Ephesus, where he establishes the church at Ephesus. In ACTS 19:8 we read: *And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.* Who mainly goes to the synagogue? Jews. Paul preached, and taught, and reasoned, and persuaded them concerning "the kingdom of God," explaining the difference in what they had been taught through Jewish tradition, and the revelation he had received from Jesus Christ concerning the heavenly Kingdom, and the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, and trying to elevate their understanding of "the kingdom of God" to it's highest levels. After these three years Paul moves on, and in ACTS 20 as Paul once again passes near Ephesus, he sends for the Ephesian elders, and reaffirmed unto them *...how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. ...32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.* (Excerpts from ACTS 20:20-32.) Later unto the Ephesian Saints Paul wrote a letter, and Brother Hill taught wrote in his Bible that EPHESIANS is the high water mark of scripture. If one verse could explain what Paul taught in expounding "the kingdom of God" it would be EPHESIANS 3:6 *That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs,*

and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel. Here again Paul uses the very same word we found in ROMANS 8:16 above: {sugkleronomos 4789} a joint-heir (fellowheirs) with Christ.

ACTS 19:8, and 20:24 above are the fourth and fifth time we find the phrase "the kingdom of God" in ACTS. On your own read the amazing adventures Paul had in ACTS 21-28 as the Lord took him to Rome showing Paul how ...we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.... ACTS 14:22. In ACTS 28 we finally find Paul getting to expound unto the chief Jews of Rome his doctrine. We read this in ACTS 28:23 *And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening.* Certainly in this length of time Paul could explain his heavenly view of "the kingdom of God." The end result for them was: *And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not....* ACTS 28:24.

Finally in ACTS 28:30 and 31 we read the seventh and final time where is found in the book of ACTS the phrase "the kingdom of God." ACTS 28:30 *And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, 31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.* Is there now any doubt that Paul was teaching about the high calling of God in Christ Jesus here? Is there any doubt that Paul was also teaching about the opportunity we all have to be a joint-heir with Christ in "the kingdom of God," to reign with Him? Don't you suppose Paul was also expounding about*God having provided some better thing for us,...* that he would later write about in HEBREWS 11:40?

Review for yourself Brother Copley's article found in the March, 1924, and July 2012 editions of the Grace and Glory Magazine, and answer the questions he asks at the end of his article, which were.... "Finally -- To which company do you belong? Are you chiefly interested in the things of the Kingdom on earth, or in the "heavenly Kingdom?" What are your aspirations --- to do and see big things accomplished here, or to know and have fellowship with the Big Man in the glory? Which do you love most -- "the ripened grain or The Lord of the harvest?" What is your highest ambition - to win men to Christ now, or gain Christ as you "exceeding great reward" in the glory? What is your hope for eternity -- simply to be saved from hell, or dwell with Christ and share His glory? To be with the vast throng who shall wave palms of victory, or with a smaller group who shall wear crowns of gold? Do you long only to stand before the throne in heaven? Or are you yearning to sit with the King of the ages and reign as His queen forever? We make that choice in this life. And the choice is ours." {End of quoting Brother Copley from his article The Gospel of the Kingdom or The gospel of the Glory.}

We have now spent considerable time in this study going over some of the information contained in ACTS 28:23, and further expounding some thoughts on the phrase "the kingdom of God." By now we should realize that Paul's gospel message was different than the other Apostles, in that his gospel message was specifically given unto us of this church age. Paul's focus was a heavenly focus with the perspective of ruling and reigning with Christ. Of course the first steps in believing such a message was to accept the fact that Jesus is the Son of God, who was sent by God into the world, not to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved... {study JOHN 3:17}. Here in Rome, Paul spent the day in ACTS 28:23 expounding and testifying to the chief Jews of Rome ...*the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening.* These men to whom Paul preached were very familiar with the very same Old Testament scriptures from which Paul expounded, but the majority of these chief Jews weren't won over to Paul's way of thinking as ACTS 28:24 points out. ACTS 28:24 *And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.* Interestingly there is a Greek word which connects ACTS 28:23 with ACTS 28:24, the Greek word *peitho* {pi'-tho}, number 3982 in The Strong's Greek Concordance. *Peitho* {pi'-tho} is found fifty-five times in The New Testament, with the meaning of persuasion, or to win over to ones way of thinking; to persuade; to have confidence in, and to bring about a change of mind. In ACTS 28:23

peitho {pi'-tho} is translated "persuading," as in Paul was ...*persuading them concerning Jesus*,... . In ACTS 28:24 peitho {pi'-tho} is translated with the first word "believed" in this verse, as in some believed (peitho {pi'-tho}) in Jesus whom Paul was persuading them about. J. B. Phillips translation of verse 24 reads: "As a result several of them were won over by his words, but others would not believe." To those who were convinced by Paul's words that day, they had the opportunity to continue to come unto Paul's own hired house here at Rome, and continue learning more about Paul's perspective concerning "the kingdom of God," and just exactly what it meant to have God's best in their own lives.

Jumping ahead here for a minute we can also make a connection here with what we have just learned, and a statement found in ACTS 28:30 & 31. ACTS 28:30 & 31 reads: *And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, 31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.* We just noted how the Greek word peitho {pi'-tho}, number 3982 in the Strong's Greek Concordance, means: to persuade; or to have confidence in. Now we see in ACTS 28:31 how Paul continued to wax bold in confidence as he preached ...*the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.* This thought also connects back to what we read above in ACTS 19:8 *And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.* The Greek word translated "persuading" here is the same peitho {pi'-tho}, meaning to induce one by words to believe. There is strong conviction behind these words of persuasion that the Apostle Paul was using in his preaching, and this strong conviction came from the Holy Ghost, who was the power behind these persuasive words that are found both here in ACTS 19:8, and in ACTS 28:23 & 24. Another word that translates in our English from the Greek word peitho {pi'-tho}, that we learned above too is "confidence." Paul uses peitho {pi'-tho} as "confidence" in the following words from PHILIPPIANS 1:6 -- *Being confident (peitho {pi'-tho}), of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:...* . When did Paul write these words? Coneybeare and Howson note that Paul penned these words to the PHILIPPIANS from his Roman prison. Obviously Paul's confidence in the Lord continued to daily increase as he continued "with all confidence" ...*Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ*,... ACTS 28:31. Others too waxed confident in the Lord, a fact that Paul also noted in PHILIPPIANS 1:14 *And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident (peitho {pi'-tho}), by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.*

(As an addendum to this study of the Greek word peitho {pi'-tho}, number 3982 in the Strong's Greek Concordance, also note the following. The Holy Ghost inspired the Apostle Paul to use this word seven (SPIRITUAL PERFECTION, or SPIRITUAL COMPLETION) times in PHILIPPIANS. PHILIPPIANS 1:6 *Being confident <3982> of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:...*14 *And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident <3982> by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.* ...25 *And having this confidence <3982>, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith;...*2:24 *But I trust <3982> in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly.* ...3:3 *For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have <3982> no confidence <3982> in the flesh. 4 Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust <3982> in the flesh, I more:...* . On your own you can look up the seven times Paul uses peitho {pi'-tho} in GALATIANS, and the five times he uses this word in ROMANS, and the five times he uses this word in 2 CORINTHIANS, and the five times in HEBREWS.)

We have already said quite a bit about ACTS 28:24 *And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not*... noting how Paul's day of ...*persuading them concerning Jesus*... went. Let's once again focus upon the phrase "believed not" that is found here for the fourth time in the book of ACTS. We have previously noted the phrase "believed not" is found nineteen times in scripture. {Review pages 374, 504,

761, and 1043 of these notes.} Nineteen is the number that has to do with FAITH. However the phrase "believed not" is exactly the opposite of FAITH. In HEBREWS 11:6 we read that without faith it is impossible to please God. The exact words from the King James version reads: *But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* Without faith equates to "believed not." JOHN 3:36 states it like this: *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.* This scripture probably best defines what it means to "believe not." PSALMS 78 contains a lengthy portion concerning the children of Israel and their wandering in the wilderness, noting that their forty years in the desert was because they "believed not" God in spite of the many marvelous and miraculous wonders and works He had done on their behalf. Review this chapter on your own. JUDE 1:5 summarizes PSALMS 78 in one verse: *I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.* Years earlier Paul too had written: 2 THESSALONIANS 3:2 ...*for all men have not faith.*

Everywhere Paul went he found Jews which believed not, and Paul himself, as Saul of Tarsus, was one of the most famous Jews which believed not until he met Jesus face to face on the road to Damascus. So Paul knew their line of thinking, and their kind of reasoning. That is why here at Rome such attitudes were not a surprise to him. Besides by this time he had dealt with thousands of Jews which "believed not." In times past during Paul's ministry when he came across Jews which believed not, they either ran him out of town, if the Lord allowed them too, or did their best to kill him! Let's quickly review a few examples of this.

In ACTS 13 after preaching at Antioch in Pisidia, we find in verse 42 *And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.* 43 *Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.* 44 *And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.* 45 *But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.* 46 *Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. ...* 50 *But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts.* 51 *But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium.* ACTS 14:1 *And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed.* 2 *But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren.* 3 *Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.* 4 *But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles.* 5 *And when there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews with their rulers, to use them despitefully, and to stone them,* 6 *They were ware of it, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe,...* ...19 *And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead.* This all happened on Paul's first missionary journey with Barnabas.

On his second missionary journey more Jews which believed not persecuted Paul. ACTS 17:1 *Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:* 2 *And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,* 3 *Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.* 4 *And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.* 5 *But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar,...* saying unto the rulers of the city in verse

6 ...*These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also...* . Paul then moved on to Berea, and in verse 13 we read: *But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people.* 14 *And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul...* . Paul then goes to Athens, and then Corinth, where after some opposition he preaches for a year and a half, and returns to Antioch, Syria.

On Paul's third missionary journey he goes to Ephesus. We read in ACTS 19:8 *And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.* 9 *But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.* About three years later Paul leaves Ephesus, and after visiting several places, Paul returns to Jerusalem enroute to Antioch, Syria to complete this third missionary journey. But while at Jerusalem Paul was assaulted by the Jews of Jerusalem, which account is found in ACTS 21:30 *And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut.* 31 *And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.* Subsequently Paul was arrested by the Romans, and has been held in their custody until the time frame of our study here in ACTS 28.

The point in reviewing all of this is to call to remembrance that finding Jews who believed not Paul's preaching was nothing new to Paul, for he had faced such opposition nearly everywhere he went. So when we read in ACTS 28:24 *And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not...* Paul was not surprised. Their reaction here at Rome however was a little different. First of all we need to note that Paul already was a prisoner here, and that these chief Jews of Rome had come to hear Paul at his request. They had put him off until they found a time convenient for them. They had no intention of pursuing violence against Paul here at Rome, especially since Paul already was being held prisoner in Caesar's' compound. Secondly we need to keep in mind that these chief Jews of Rome had in recent memory been expelled from Rome when Emperor ...*Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:...* in ACTS 18:2. Simply put, they had voluntarily heard Paul preach, and had no intention of physically harming him. So in one respect Paul faced a better mannered group of Jews here at Rome, however their heart attitudes mirrored Jewish attitudes towards Christ that are still prevalent in our world today.

There is another little subtle difference in these unbelieving Jews of Rome manifest in examining the Greek translation of "believed not." Previously we found the Greek word translated "believed not" in ACTS 17:5 and ACTS 19:9 (above) was *apeitheo*, number 544 in the Strong's Greek Concordance, meaning to refuse to be persuaded, to refuse to believe, to refuse or withhold belief, to refuse belief and obedience, not to allow one's self to be persuaded, and not to comply with. The first time this word *apeitheo* is used in the New Testament is in JOHN 3:36 (also noted above), which reads: *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not* ~~544~~ *the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.* Again this scripture probably best defines what it means to "believe not." A different Greek word is found here in ACTS 28:24 translated "believed not." Here the Greek word is *apisteo* {ap-is-teh'-o}, number 569 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, with the "a" being a negative to "pistis" a word for faith; *apisteo* {ap-is-teh'-o}, negative faith, or no faith. Thus *apisteo* {ap-is-teh'-o} equates to unbelieving, or disbelieve. It also means: to have no belief, to be unfaithful, to be unbelieving, and in our King James *apisteo* {ap-is-teh'-o} simply is translated "believed not." Again Paul had dealt with those who "believed not" all throughout his ministry, and had previously written in 2 THESSALONIANS 3:2 *...for all men have not faith.*

ACTS 28:24 *And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.* Bring this thought down to today, and realize after hearing good sound rightly divided preaching from the word of God, there are still today some who believe the things which are spoken, and some who believe not. And this is true even of Christians. How many Christians really believe ROMANS 8:28? ROMANS 8:28 *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.* Of course only the Heart Examiner really knows the answer to

such a question, but I bet you know Christians who don't really believe this scripture. How many Christians believe in eternal security? How many Christians believe in being filled with the Holy Ghost? How many Christians believe in ranks in the resurrection? How many Christians know what it is to run the race to win Christ as bridegroom? How many Christians believe in the grace of God? How many Christians follow Paul as he followed Christ? We could go on and on with this, but I think you realize too, that still today it could even be said of Christians: *And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.* Be a Berean Saint.

What is a Berean Saint you may ask? The Berean Saints were of the highest quality that Paul found anywhere he ever went. What made them special? ACTS 17:11 tells us the answer: *These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.* Two points: they received the word of God with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily to see for themselves whether or not those things taught by Paul were true or not. There is a big difference between "received," and reject. These Berean's didn't reject the preaching of Paul, but rather *...received the word with all readiness of mind.* "Received" here means: to receive favorably, give ear to, embrace, make one's own, approve, not to reject. And what did they "receive?" It was the word of God preached by Paul in the power of the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance of faith that these Berean Saints readily latched onto as their own. And note how they "received," it was *...with all readiness of mind,* which means with a willing mind did they receive Paul's gospel. One commentator put it like this: they received Paul's gospel with "all readiness, as a hungry man receives his food, and greedily feeds upon it, or as a man ready to perish receives and lays a hold of anything that offers for his safety." Paul himself wrote of this very same concept in ROMANS 15:4 *For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.* Mark these words. Because these Berean's *...received the word with all readiness of mind...* we find a natural progression to the next point made in verse 11, which was they *...searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.* This searching the scriptures is what makes believers good Bible students. Further this searching the scriptures daily is what makes believers full overcomers. How do you know if the preacher is telling you the truth? You need to search the scriptures for yourself to see if these things are true. The word "searched" here in verse 11 means: to investigate, examine, enquire into, scrutinize, sift, question, to hold an investigation. Such is the more noble frame of mind that was found in Berea. They investigated the scriptures daily whether those wonderful things spoken by Paul were really true. The Berean Saints attained God's best: Those that have God's best during this church age will be in the Bride of Christ. Those who are alive at the soon coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who will be in the Bride of Christ are pictured by the Philadelphian church of REVELATION 3:7-13. They know the importance of knowing the word of God. REVELATION 3:8 *I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name...* . Note the fact that they of Philadelphia have *...kept my word...* . Jesus emphasizes the fact that the Philadelphian Saint knows the word of God, and even more importantly has kept the word of God, for He twice makes note of this fact: first in REVELATION 3:8 *...and hast kept my word...*; and second in REVELATION 3:10 *...thou hast kept the word of my patience...* . These are high water mark statements made by the Lord concerning the New Testament worthies of faith. The Lord doesn't waste words or use words loosely, and wants those who have ears to hear, to note what His word is, and what it states. The thing about the Berean Saints was that the Apostle Paul was only there a short period of time, maybe as little as six weeks, yet the Bereans were fervently seeking God's best. How about you?

ACTS 28:24 *And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.* We have now examined this verse in some detail. Realize that these Jews of Rome had listened unto Paul from morning until evening before reaching their conclusions on whether they were going to believe Paul's teaching, or not. *And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.* There was some discussion among themselves here after Paul spoke all day, which is noted in both verse 25 and 29. ACTS 28:25 reads: *And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed,...* . Verse 29

notes: ...the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves. And it is important to at least note that their discussion was amongst themselves, and not directed negatively against Paul. Again the setting where Paul addressed them was from his prison quarters, with Roman guards present, so an uprising against Paul was all but out of the question here. Thus in a civil manner they reasoned among themselves for a short time while still in the presence of Paul. Luke doesn't mention Paul answering any questions here, so he must have only heard their discussions, which revolved around some believing the things which Paul taught, and some believing not. Good preaching, and good teaching will prompt good discussion. On this day they had ...*tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come*,... HEBREWS 6:5. {Here review pages 829-831 of these notes.} Serious life changing decisions were being pondered here.

Parting words from Paul would follow, which would echo a theme expressed nearly everywhere Paul had preached. These were warning words from Old Testament scripture addressing those who would believe not. In his concluding words of Paul's pattern synagogue sermon left for us in scripture in ACTS 13, we read: 40 *Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets;* 41 *Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.* These were powerful words Paul spoke here, quoting from HABAKKUK 1:5 *Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvellously: for I will work a work in your days, which ye will not believe, though it be told you.* Actually Paul here at Antioch in Pisidia was probably quoting this scripture HABAKKUK 1:5 from the Greek Septuagint version of the Old Testament, which reads: *for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.* These concluding words focused on the heart of everyone who was hearing his message, and allowing them to see for themselves whether or not they were going to let the light of the gospel shine in their hearts and believe, or not. There too in Pisidia ...*some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.* And we saw above the end result led to Paul being run out of town, and later stoned at Lystra.

Again, this is not going to happen here at Rome, but the Holy Ghost inspired Paul to quote some more Old Testament scripture, which we will get to in verse 26 & 27. But first we have the words Luke was inspired to write in verse 25: *And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers*,... . Here we get another glimpse into the heart of an overcomer. Paul's language here shows where he was getting his inspiration, and how focused he was upon the things of God. Specifically we will see that it is the word of God that has Paul's attention, but as we have often noted before, Jesus Christ really is The Word of God, a fact noted in REVELATION 19:13. So knowing and referencing the word of God is really acknowledging Jesus. Here in verse 25 we find Paul giving parting words that start out: *...Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers*,... . Ask yourself, how familiar were these chief Jews of Rome with the Holy Ghost? Probably not very much, just like most church going people are today. Perhaps they had heard of the Holy Ghost, but have no idea His purpose or function. Jesus spent hours explaining the power and purpose of the Holy Ghost unto His disciples, and until the day of Pentecost they really didn't get it. JOHN 14, 15, and 16 tells some about this. After His resurrection Jesus appeared unto His disciples in JOHN 20:22 and *...breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost*:... . Later in ACTS 1:8 Jesus announced to His disciples: *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.* After Pentecost when they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance, they began to experience the power and inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and do the many marvelous works we have been studying about. They then began better to understand those things Jesus had previously told them about. All of the Apostles were filled, and full of the Holy Ghost. Paul too had joined their ranks in ACTS 9:17 & 18. Paul's power as an Apostle came from the Holy Ghost. Paul's words he spoke in preaching and teaching were too inspired by the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost was a matter of fact part of Paul's everyday life. Thus we don't find it incredible for Paul to reference the Holy Ghost in his speech, however those chief Jews at Rome no doubt weren't used to such language. Yet they had just experienced a day of listening to a Holy

Ghost inspired message, which had some what pricked their own hearts, otherwise why have these reasonings, and discussions amongst themselves as to whether or not these things Paul spoke of were true or not?

Recall some of the functions of the Holy Ghost that Jesus told His disciples about back in JOHN 14, 15, and 16. In JOHN 14:16, 26; 15:26; and 16:7 Jesus calls the Holy Ghost the Comforter. Of course the Holy Ghost is only a Comforter to the believer. In JOHN 14:16 Jesus said: *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;...* How long is for ever? To the believer filled with the Holy Ghost are given certain benefits, besides that of a Comforter. JOHN 14:26 explains the Holy Ghost's responsibility to teach you all things concerning what Jesus has said, and to bring all things to your remembrance concerning what Jesus has said. JOHN 16:13 reveals that the Holy Ghost also will guide you into all truth, and to show you things to come. Do you follow His leading? JOHN 15:26 witnesses how the Holy Ghost is a testimony of Jesus. These are some of the unexplainable benefits of being filled with the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost also deals with the unbeliever. Jesus said this of the Holy Ghost in JOHN 16:8- 11 -- *And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 Of sin, because they believe not on me; 10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; 11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.* The Greek word translated "reprove" in verse 8 is *elegcho* {el-eng'-kho}, (number 1651 in The Strong's Greek Concordance), meaning: to convict, to call to account. Here in ACTS 28 Paul was letting the Holy Ghost convict the hearts of the Roman Jews by expounding unto them scriptures they were familiar with.

We just read in ACTS 28:24 *And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.* And have also noted what Paul had previously written in 2 THESSALONIANS 3:2 *...for all men have not faith.* Paul had just spent the whole day here at Rome expounding from morning until evening the word of God unto these chief Jews of Rome. Paul also had written an epistle to the ROMANS some years earlier, as we previously noted. We are not told if Paul referenced his letter to the ROMANS on this day or not, but perhaps he did. In the least he no doubt expressed the very same things he wrote unto them found in ROMANS 10. So let's read ROMANS 10 here, and see how perfectly these very same thought tie into this full day of reasoning with the chief Jews of Rome here in ACTS 28:23.

ROMANS 10:1 *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. 2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. 4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. 5 For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. 6 But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above;) 7 Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) 8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. 12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. 13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. 14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! 16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? 17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. 18 But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. 19 But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I*

will anger you. 20 But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. 21 But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.

Note above in this passage from ROMANS 10 that Paul twice references Isaiah, (Esaias), and quotes passages from the book of ISAIAH at least four times. (ROMANS 10:11 references ISAIAH 28:16 and ISAIAH 49:23. ROMANS 10:15 references ISAIAH 52:7, and contains thoughts found also in ISAIAH 40:9; 57:19; and 61:1. ROMANS 10:16 references ISAIAH 53:1. ROMANS 10:20 & 21 refers to ISAIAH 65:1 & 2.) Again recall what Paul had already written unto the Saints of Rome in ROMANS 10:17 *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*. The majority of these to whom Paul spoke this day in ACTS 28:23 obviously hadn't read Paul's ROMANS epistle, yet. Nor had the words Paul later was inspired to write in HEBREWS 4:12 been penned. HEBREWS 4:12 *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*. Here this day at Rome Paul knew by their discussions that not all agreed with what he had to say. To those that believed not Paul speaks some more thoughts from ISAIAH in his words of ACTS 28:25-28 -- *...Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, 26 Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: 27 For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. 28 Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it*.

Now it was up to the Holy Ghost to convict their hearts concerning the word of God they had just heard. The emphasis of this whole day's preaching, and teaching by the Apostle Paul unto these chief Jews of Rome had been the word of the LORD. Again Paul had now preached from morning until evening, expounding and *...persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets,...* out of the scriptures in other words; out of the very same word of God from which they had been taught in synagogue services since their youth. What had they heard? What had they learned? What did they believe? Had this word of God pricked their heart as noted in HEBREWS 4:12 above? HEBREWS 4:12 *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*. Again we note what ROMANS 10:17 has to say about the word of God: *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*. The answers to these questions we have just asked concerning these Jews of Rome are found in verse 24 of ACTS 28, which we have already studied a great deal about: *And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not*. To the yet unbelieving Paul had one more portion of scripture brought to his attention by the Holy Ghost, which were words from Isaiah the prophet quoted from ISAIAH 6:9 & 10. ISAIAH 6:9 *And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. 10 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed*. These words would also give these departing Jews more things to consider as they thought about the things they had heard from the Apostle Paul on this very day.

Let's spend a little time here probing the depths of what the Holy Ghost inspired Isaiah to both prophesy, and write, realizing here the far reaching magnitude of the word of God. As we go through this try to get a grip on how much of the word of God you yourself have latched onto with your hearing, seeing, and understanding heart of faith. For in the end the full overcomers will be those who did indeed hear, see, and fully receive in their understanding heart by faith the word of God. ROMANS 10:17 *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*. This point is further emphasized by Jesus in His closing remarks to the seven representative churches of

REVELATION 2 & 3. *...He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches...* REVELATION 2:7; 2:11; 2:17; 2:29; 3:6; 3:13; and 3:22!

ISAIAH is part of the word of God, and the portion of scripture that Paul here quotes from can truly be noted as a high water mark of scripture. ISAIAH 6:9 & 10 is referenced, or quoted from in MATTHEW 13:14 & 15; MARK 4:12; LUKE 8:10; JOHN 12:40 and here in ACTS 28:26 & 27. Before Isaiah himself could proclaim the above noted word of God, he himself had to have an open hearing, seeing, and understanding heart of faith. We will see this as we continue here to explore the magnitude of what the Holy Ghost inspired Paul to quote.

A few years ago we did a series of lessons here in Sunday School concerning the hearing hearts of faith. Part of what we had to say in that series of lessons is very appropriate to review as we consider the depths of what is found here in ACTS 28:26 & 27. The emphasis of that study was on hearing as highlighted by Paul in ROMANS 10:17 *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*. The emphasis being on hearing the word of God; hearing with receptive hearts of faith! We went clear back to Adam and Eve and noted what they had heard of the word of God, and what they really latched onto. They were really only given one commandment by God as a command. One rule to follow. That's it. One. Here is the word of God given them to follow: GENESIS 2:15 *And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.* Adam and Eve heard the instructions given them of God, they heard his one and only commandment given unto them, they listened to this command, they knew this command, they could repeat it because they memorized it, they knew this command was the word of God given unto them by God, but did they have an understanding heart of faith to really believe the word of God?

GENESIS 3:1 *Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? 2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: 3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.*

Here we find that Eve well knew the one and only commandment that God had given Adam and her to follow. She had with her own ear heard this command. She knew it well. She innocently repeated this command unto the serpent, for she knew God's instructions well. She had listened unto this command, she had heard this command, she well knew this command, but did she believe in her heart this command of the LORD God? The answer we find in scripture is that no Eve did not believe the word of God, and gave in to the reasoning of the Satan inspired serpent.

GENESIS 3:4 *And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: 5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. 6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her;... .* Before reading the rest of this verse we need to understand 1 TIMOTHY 2:13 & 14. 1 TIMOTHY 2:13 *For Adam was first formed, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.* Adam now had a choice to make, to eat of the forbidden fruit, like his wife Eve did, and face death; or go back to living alone. Before Eve was formed, Adam had lived alone, and even God had said in GENESIS 2:18 *...It is not good that the man should be alone;... .* Adam was not deceived, but chose not to live alone again, so after thinking all of this over GENESIS 3:4 continues....*and he did eat.* Adam wanted to live with his bride, so he willingly did eat. Here too Adam pictures Christ, for 2 CORINTHIANS 5:21 tells us: *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* Jesus too wants to forever live with His Bride, but in order to do so He, who knew no sin, willingly had to be made sin for us. 1 JOHN 3:5 *And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.*

Back to hearing the word of God, and hearing with receptive hearts of faith, we need to see here that Eve, then Adam really didn't believe the command of God they heard with a believing and receiving heart of faith. ROMANS 14:23 in part tells us: *...for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.* By not believing they disobeyed the word of God. Thus ROMANS 5:12 tells us: *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:...* . Quiet a consequence for us all wasn't it? King Saul too knew it was sin not to believe the word of God, and in 1 SAMUEL 15:24 we read: *And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD,...* .

As for Adam and Eve, let's finish their story in GENESIS 3, and make a connection with what is written there that reaches down to us as potential New Testament worthies of faith that will qualify to be in the Bride of Christ. God had some more things to say to Adam and Eve after the above events took place. So in GENESIS 3:11 God asks: *...Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? 12 And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. 13 And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. ...16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. 17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; 18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; 19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. 20 And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living. ...22 And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: 23 Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. 24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.*

The connection we need to note here to the New Testament full overcomer revolves around our understanding what is represented by the Cherubims here in GENESIS 3:24. Of course this in itself is a large study to take on, and I urge you to do so on your own. You may find it helpful to reference Sister Mary Bodie's tract on the "Cherubim and Seraphim" in this regard. In short the Cherubims referenced here, and the "seraphims" of ISAIAH 6:2, are representative of the full overcomers of this church age. It will take the eye opening power of the Holy Ghost for you to fully be able to see this for yourself. The full overcomers of this church age are noted to have kept the word of God in REVELATION 3:8 and 3:10, and the flaming sword of GENESIS 3:24 also is figurative of the word of God. EPHESIANS 6:17 tells us about *...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:...* . As you study the cherubim(s) you will always find them in close connection with the throne of God. In REVELATION 4:6-8 you can find them pictured as the four living creatures "in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne," "saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." ISAIAH 6:3 records this of them: *And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.* Study this out for yourself, and see how the Cherubims and seraphims picture the New Testament worthies of faith, who had the hearing ear, and the open heart of faith, to believe the word of God they had heard, and just as important, their actions proved their overcoming faith.

Here in GENESIS 3:24 we also find mentioned "the tree of life," which in general terms is a reference to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Himself, who is also called in REVELATION 19:13 "The Word of God." Recall what is written in GENESIS 2 concerning "the tree of life." GENESIS 2:9 *And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. ...15 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. 16 And the LORD God*

commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. Note here that there were no restrictions given unto Adam or Eve concerning eating of "the tree of life," yet they never touched it. However after eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil there was placed a guard ...to keep the way of the tree of life. GENESIS 3:22 And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: 23 Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. 24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

We find the tree of life mentioned three times in the book of GENESIS: GENESIS 2:9; 3:22; and 3:24, and three times in the book of REVELATION: REVELATION 2:7; 22:2; 22:14, kind of like book ends to the Word of God. REVELATION 2:7 reads: *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.* This is a heavenly setting. Adam and Eve had an opportunity to eat of the tree of life, yet they never availed themselves of that opportunity. You and I also have an opportunity to eat of the tree of life, and Brother Copley notes that "this is the first and main promise to full overcomers. When the Lord created Adam and placed him in Eden, He gave him the privilege to "eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the garden." But when he sinned, he forfeited that privilege -- GENESIS 2:16 & 3:22. Redemption canceled that forfeiture, and did more. It provided that the new creation shall eat, not simply of that material, symbolic tree of life, but of Christ Himself, the True Tree of Life. When on earth, He announced Himself to be the "true bread from heaven." (End of quote from Brother Copley). Brother Copley here is referring to JOHN 6. In JOHN 6 Jesus gives the great discourse on the bread of life, stating in JOHN 6:48 *I am that bread of life.* Again in JOHN 6:51 *I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.* The tree of life in the garden of Eden was a real literal tree, just like Adam and Eve were real literal people. Adam and Eve are also types in their spiritual representations to us. The Apostle Paul tells us in ROMANS 5:14 tells us that Adam was a type or figure of him that was to come. In other words Adam was a type of Christ. It follows then that Eve was a type of the Bride of Christ. The first man Adam was made a living soul, and the last Adam (Christ) became a quickening spirit, 1 CORINTHIANS 15:45 tells us. The tree of life too has a spiritual representation, which we find here in type in REVELATION. That is why Brother Copley noted that Christ Himself is the True Tree of Life. The full overcomer takes advantage of the opportunity given him and eats of the True Tree of Life, feeding on the Word of God whom Jesus is. The full overcomer fully realizes that Jesus truly is that bread of life, and they feed on Him and His word daily, because Jesus is their first preeminent love.

Each and everyone of us need to pay close attention to what we hear, and especially how we hear the word of God. We need to hear with open hearts of hearing, and believing. To have God's best we need the hearing ears of the full overcomer. It should be each of our individual goals to be a full overcomer, and if this is what you have purposed in your heart, then your ears of hearing need to be open ears of faith. Clement of Alexandria wrote: "Faith, the ears of the soul." ROMANS 10:17 again tells us: *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* The word of God also tells us in AMOS 8:11 *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD.*

The New Testament full overcomer, which is the Bride of Christ, also learns important lessons from the Old Testament worthies of faith. A partial listing of these icons of faith is found in HEBREWS 11. Note that Adam and Eve are not found mentioned there. All those mentioned in HEBREWS 11 pleased God with their faith. HEBREWS 11:6 *But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe*

that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. All listed in HEBREWS 11 had one thing in common, listening ears of hearing that heard with open hearts the word of God, and they believed what they heard. In other words they followed God's instructions given unto them, even though through natural means the things said to them by God may have seemed impossible. Yet by faith those hearers of God's Word listed in HEBREWS 11 did many impossible things. Where did they get such faith? ROMANS 10:17 answers this question, and points us back to the fact that those of faith have listening ears of hearing that hear with open hearts the word of God, and they believe what they hear. ROMANS 10:17 reads: *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

Consider Abraham, who is highlighted as one of the worthies of faith in HEBREWS 11. GALATIANS 3:6 & 7 tells us: *Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. 7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.* Anyone who has ever believed on the Lord Jesus Christ as their own personal Saviour has, like Abraham of old, believed God with their hearing ears of their open hearts of faith. GALATIANS 3:6 is a reference to GENESIS 15:6, which reads: *And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.* GENESIS 15:6 is also referenced in two other scriptures besides GALATIANS 3:6. ROMANS 4:3 *For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.* JAMES 2:23 *And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.*

Abraham is distinguished in scripture as the father of the faithful. GALATIANS 3:7 *Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.* Abraham went on to become an Old Testament worthy of faith; a full overcomer. Abraham not only believed God for salvation, but went on to live his life by faith in God. Abraham, like Enoch and Noah before him, walked with God, and pleased God with his faith.

JUDE 1:14 declares that Enoch was a prophet way before Abraham. Enoch walked with God (GENESIS 5:24), Enoch talked with God, God talked with Enoch, and Enoch heard with open listening ears of faith that believed God, and God was so pleased with Enoch following His instructions that He translated him, for Enoch had this testimony that he pleased God. Enoch is mentioned by name in HEBREWS 11.

Abraham also walked with God by faith, with the hearing ear of the open heart of faith he followed God's instructions, in other word he believed God, and went on to become an Old Testament full overcomer. Four times in scripture we read this statement: *the just shall live by faith.* {HABAKKUK 2:4; ROMANS 1:17; GALATIANS 3:11; and HEBREWS 10:38}. Abraham lived his life by faith. When the scripture says Abraham believed God it means that he, Abraham, had the hearing ear of the open heart of faith, which all full overcomers must have. Where did Abraham get such faith? ROMANS 10:17 again gives the answer: *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* Now you may ask, when did Abraham hear the word of God? Abraham heard the word of God from God Himself, just like Adam and Eve heard the word of God from Lord God Himself. Read the story of Abraham in GENESIS, and see for yourself that the LORD God spoke many times unto Abraham, and even made covenants with him!

On your own go back in scripture and note the following: 30 times God told Abraham "I will." 5 times God told Abraham "will I." 2 CORINTHIANS 1:20 tells us in part: *For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen...* . When God says "I will" He means "I will," not I might, or maybe I will. HEBREWS 6:18 tells us that it is impossible for God to lie. Do you believe this? Those with open ears, with hearing ears, with listening ears, hear with open hearts and receive and believe the word of God.

Adam and Eve didn't follow God's one and only command given unto them, for they didn't believe God like Abraham did. Was there ever a greater test of Abraham than offering his one and only son of promise upon the altar? No. Abraham heard the voice of God with open ears, with careful listening ears, with an open heart full of faith, and he said "here I am." {GENESIS 22:1}. "Here I am" Lord, I will follow your instructions for I believe everything you say is true. This is what the hearing ears of faith hear. PART OF HEARING IS FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS.

The phrases "here I am" and "here am I" are often responses to inquires of the Lord to specific individuals. The Lord calls out a persons name from heaven and they answer either "here am I" or "here I am." Part of obeying the voice of the Lord is to answer Him when you are called. Note some of who these people were in scripture that answered the voice of the Lord from heaven "here am I" or "here I am." Abraham (GENESIS 22:1 & 11), Jacob (GENESIS 31:11, 46:2), Moses (EXODUS 3:4), Samuel (1 SAMUEL 3:4-8), Isaiah (ISAIAH 6:8, which we will study in more depth shortly). Note where else in scripture we find mentioned these same people in one chapter, that is HEBREWS 11. These Old Testament worthies of faith heard the voice of the Lord, they heard with listening ears of hearing, with open hearts of faith, they believed what they heard, and they received and followed by faith the instructions given unto them from the Lord. Thus they are found mentioned in the hall of fame of Old Testament full overcomers.

Moses, an Old Testament worthy of faith mentioned in the 11th chapter of HEBREWS, was one who also answered the voice of the Lord "here am I." Obviously in order for Moses to answer the voice of the Lord he first of must have heard the voice of the Lord, and heard the voice of the Lord with listening ears of hearing. Consider God's communications with Moses. In EXODUS 3:2 we found that *"...the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush..."*, and in verse 4 we saw that *"...God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses...."* We noted in EXODUS 33:11 that *"...the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend..."*, and that the phrase *"...the LORD spake unto Moses..."* is found 105 times in scripture, the phrase *"the LORD said unto Moses"* 55 times in scripture, and the phrase *"the LORD had spoken unto Moses"* is found three times in scripture. EXODUS 6:2 again reads in part: *And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the LORD...*

Not all, including Moses, including the Apostle Paul, receive the word of God the same day they first heard it. It took all who heard the word of God some time to fully receive it. Moses asked God a lot of questions in EXODUS 3 & 4 because he had serious reservations about what he was hearing from God. Moses heard what God was saying, but didn't really grasp or receive the full impact of what he was being told at first listening. But as Moses walked on with God he became more and more confident in God's ability to do what He said He would do. Moses heard the word of God; in time he received the word of God; he further believed the word of God, and reached the point in faith that Moses in the darkest of circumstances and times could trust God to deliver the children of Israel out of Egypt by way of the Red Sea. Moses lead the children of Israel for forty years in impossible conditions by his faith and trust in God. Thus Moses becomes to us an example of an Old Testament full overcomer, and how the full overcomer is tested through impossible circumstances. ALL FULL OVERCOMERS ARE TESTED THIS WAY! Do you have ears to hear such things? Do you receive the word of God like the Old Testament full overcomers did? These are good questions to ask yourself.

A prophet is one who has heard the voice of the Lord, and further is "one who announces or pours forth the declarations of God." JUDE 1:14 tells us that Old Testament worthy of faith Encoth was a prophet who prophesied of things yet to come even in our day. GENESIS 20:7 declares that Abraham was a prophet, and DEUTERONOMY 34:10 tells us this of Moses: *And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face...* Then in Moses time God introduced an additional method of getting His word out, and that was with the written word. EXODUS 31:18 is a written statement from God to the children of Israel after God had finished saying what He had to say to Moses upon Mount Sinai: *And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.*

There were thus many ways in which the word of God was communicated unto man. The question each and every hearer of the word of God must answer for his or herself is; "do I believe the word of God myself?" Jesus asked this same question Himself of the Jews in JOHN 5. JOHN 5:46 *For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. 47 But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?* So the written Word of God was to be heard and heeded just as much as the spoken word of God was to be heard and heeded.

To us is written seven times in REVELATION 2 & 3 these Holy Ghost inspired words: *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches....* . We are living in the church age, and these words spoken of John in REVELATION 2 & 3 are specifically written unto us of this church age. Do we have ears to hear the word of God? HEBREWS 2:3 *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;...* . In LUKE 11:28 Jesus Himself said: *...Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.* This equates to what we read in GENESIS 3:24 of the Cherubims who had *...a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.*

Today we have an untold number of written texts and study material concerning the word of God. Further we have the word of God available to us through radio, television, audio tape, video tape, CD, DVD, computer, telephone, cell phone, i-phone, i-pads, text, and even twitter! The question to us today is then larger than ever: "Do we have ears to hear the word of God, and open hearts that are willing to fully receive the word of God?"

One of the more profound portions of scripture in the Bible is found in ISAIAH 6, an Old Testament high water mark of scripture highlighting the importance of hearing the word of the Lord with open hearts of faith. ISAIAH 6:8 *Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?* The voice of the Lord was asking a question: *Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?* Isaiah heard this calling with open ears of hearing *...the voice of the Lord.* Thus Isaiah answers; *...Here am I; send me.* ISAIAH 6:9 *And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. 10 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.* This statement is quoted time and time again in the teachings of Jesus and the Apostle Paul, experts of Old Testament scripture, and Master teachers of the gospel. We find this text quoted at Rome by Paul in ACTS 28:26 & 27. In the New Testament this statement is attributed to Isaiah, but as we have just learned, this statement first came from "the voice of the Lord." To fully appreciate the magnitude of what Isaiah wrote here, let's reference the whole chapter of ISAIAH 6, and see how Isaiah came to this often quoted statement.

ISAIAH 6:1 *In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. 2 Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. 3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. 4 And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. 5 Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. 6 Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: 7 And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. 8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me. 9 And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. 10 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed. 11 Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, 12 And the LORD have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land. 13 But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves: so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.*

Again ISAIAH 6 is an Old Testament high water mark of scripture highlighting the importance of hearing the word of the Lord with open hearts of faith. Quotations from ISAIAH 6:9 & 10 are again found in MATTHEW 13:14 & 15; MARK 4:12; LUKE 8:10; JOHN 12:40 and ACTS 28:26 & 27, all important verses in the word of God. Isaiah too had to

learn the importance of these words of the Lord, which were revealed unto him in this incredible vision of ISAIAH 6. Isaiah is one of the prophets referenced in HEBREWS 11:32; one of the Old Testament worthies of faith, who *...without us should not be made perfect...* according to HEBREWS 11:40.

Before digging deeper into this chapter in a little more detail, let's first note the following. This heavenly scene Isaiah witnessed gives us a rare glimpse of the throne room, which very few writers of scripture were privileged to view. EZEKIEL 1 describes this scene, as does John in REVELATION 4, and Daniel in DANIEL 7. Our Apostle Paul wrote in 2 CORINTHIANS 12:1-4 about a heavenly encounter he witnessed, yet this gifted teacher of scripture couldn't find adequate words to describe what he saw, and only was able to write of this event fourteen years later! Think about this for a minute, Paul, who knew Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, a well educated man with excellent knowledge of scripture, he couldn't find the words to describe what he saw of heaven. Paul did write in 1 CORINTHIANS 2:9 *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* There were others too who were allowed to see a glimpse of the throne of the Lord, such as Micaiah in 1 KINGS 22:19, and Stephen in ACTS 7:55 & 56. Thus when we arrive at such portions of scripture, we need to really pay close attention to what is going on there.

This scene Isaiah observed in ISAIAH 6 describes things after Jesus sets up His throne on earth. Highlighted in this chapter is the incredible importance, and magnitude of hearing, heeding, receiving, and believing the word of God. Here in also we see the essence of the pure word of God, and the elevated heights that it takes the full overcomer too. All overcomers act upon, and keep the word of God, which is a fact of their spiritual perfection. We noted above (see page 1112 of these notes) that the "seraphims" of ISAIAH 6:2, are representative of the full overcomers of this church age, as are the Cherubim's of GENESIS 3:24, who were left as a guard *...to keep the way of the tree of life.* The full overcomers are seen in ISAIAH 6 as having heard with their ears, and seen with their eyes, and believed in their heart the Word of God, and are now intimately, and inseparably a part of the executive righteousness of Christ as he sits on His throne, in perfect harmony, and sympathy with God's will as they are put on display in Isaiah's vision! The "seraphims" show no hesitation in acting upon the Lord of hosts will. They achieved these overcoming qualities here on earth as they followed Paul as he followed Christ all the way to the throne room! These representative "seraphims" of ISAIAH 6:2 ran a good race, fought a good fight, have kept the faith, and loved His appearing while following ROMANS 10:17 while here on earth. ROMANS 10:17 *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* Again we note that the full overcomers of this church age are noted to have kept the word of God in REVELATION 3:8 and 3:10, and here in ISAIAH 6 are pictured as the seraphims, where we find them in close connection with the throne of the Lord, intimately and inseparably a part of the executive righteousness of His throne, acting in perfect harmony with His will as joint-heirs with Christ. How close to God are you?

Another important point to keep in mind concerning the "seraphims" is the meaning of this word. Sister Bodie correctly notes that "seraphims" means "burning ones." It speaks of the deep burning fire that the full overcomers have in their all encompassing love for the Lord. Such fire is ignited, and fueled by the power of the Holy Ghost. In MATTHEW 3:11, and LUKE 3:16 John the Baptist spoke of Jesus baptizing *...you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:...* This took place on the day of Pentecost with the symbolic symbol of *...cloven tongues like as of fire...* that sat upon each of the hundred and twenty as they were filled with the Holy Ghost in the upper room... ACTS 2:3. Note in ISAIAH 6:1-4 that the "seraphims" point of focus is "the Lord of hosts," who is Jesus, The Word of God.

After witnessing this marvelous scene of ISAIAH 6:1-4, and getting a glimpse of the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, Isaiah proclaimed in verse 5 *...Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.* This was a passionate cry of grief or despair expressing the wretched state he was in. His lips couldn't yet put to words the same kind of praise and worship he had just heard proclaimed by the

seraphims. This heavenly scene was too much for him. Job too came to a similar conclusion in JOB 42:5 & 6 after a four chapter visit by the Lord in a whirlwind: *JOB 42:5 I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. 6 Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.* Abraham when interceding for Lot said to the Lord in GENESIS 18:27 *...Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes:...* Isaiah then expresses: *...I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.* One translation of this reads "I am a foul-mouthed man and I live among a foul-mouthed people." He is really crying out for help to express the kind of worship he can not yet enter into, nor utter. Neither can you nor I without the power of the Holy Ghost. ROMANS 8:26 & 27 tells us: *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.* JOHN 4:23 & 24 tells us: *But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.* Also JOHN 14:17; 15:26; and 16:13 informs us that the Holy Ghost is also known as the Spirit of truth. It is The Holy Spirit of truth that helpeth our infirmities, and maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. All New Testament full overcomers will be full of the Holy Ghost.

All full overcomers along their individual race course come to the place of *...Woe is me!* The Lord brings the race course runner to places, and situations, and circumstances in their life where they too get to face the impossible, and also realize *...Woe is me!* Such events are perfect places of testing, where overcoming faith is worked into our lives. On your own look up the phrase "Woe is me," and find it seven times in scripture, recalling that the number seven points to SPIRITUAL PERFECTION, or SPIRITUAL COMPLETION. Recently in our study here on the life of the Apostle Paul, we came to the time in ACTS 27 where all on Paul's ship faced "woe is me" time, and probably experienced "woe is me" for most of the two weeks they were lost at sea. Paul wasn't exempt from that "woe is me" time either. ACTS 27:20 reads: *And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.* The Lord came in for Paul at this "woe is me" time, and in turn he was able to lead all two hundred seventy six on board his ship safe to shore by following the instructions given him of the Lord. At the Red Sea with Pharaoh's army in hot pursuit all the children of Israel faced "woe is me" time, yet Moses by faith said unto the people *"...Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace...."* EXODUS 14:13 & 14. Thank the Lord when you get to these "woe is me" times in your life, and also look for the salvation of the Lord as he takes you through these intense dark valleys of overcoming Christian life. 1 SAMUEL 2:8 tells us: *He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, and he hath set the world upon them.* Old Testament worthy of faith David wrote in PSALMS 23:4 *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.* Gifted with Holy Ghost inspired words, Brother Hill wrote: "God will deliberately put us in situations to make us realize our need of Him. We don't have to call on Him, however, but His purpose in the matter will not be accomplished if we don't." (The Shepherd's Psalm page 32.) Again thank the Lord for these "woe is me" times in our lives, so that we too can say: *...Hitherto hath the LORD helped us....* 1 SAMUEL 7:12. Paul wrote in 2 CORINTHIANS 12:10 these words of encouragement: *Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.*

Note what is said next in ISAIAH 6:6 & 7 -- *Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: 7 And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.* Several points of understanding must be

realized here before we can move on. First of all, who can take away our sins, and purge iniquity? There is only One, our lovely Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. ROMANS 5:8 tells us: *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* 1 CORINTHIANS 15:3 reads: *For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;...* JOHN 1:29 expounds what John the Baptist said: *The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.* 1 JOHN 1:7 goes on to tell us *...the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.* Again the Apostle Paul also wrote the following: 2 CORINTHIANS 5:21 *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* HEBREWS 1:3 *Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;...* ...9:22 *And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.* ...9:26 *For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.* And one more verse, PSALMS 79:9 *Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name: and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake.* These are but a few references showing that only Jesus can take away our sins, and purge iniquity, and He did so on the cross of Calvary!

Secondly let's address the live coal, the tongs, and the altar. What is there significance? The altar is a place of worship, and points back to the cross on which Christ was made a sacrifice for sin. HEBREWS 10:12 tells that Christ *...after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;...* In the Old Testament the fire on the altar was first kindled by the Lord in LEVITICUS 9:24, and as kept continuously burning according to LEVITICUS 6:12 & 13. So the altar pictures Christ.

The tongs are found in EXODUS 25:38, 1 KINGS 7:49, and 2 CHRONICLES 4:21 where they are noted to be of "perfect gold." The golden tongs picture the Holy Spirit, who raised up Jesus from the dead. ROMANS 8:11 explains *...But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.* In HEBREWS 13:20 the Holy Spirit is called "the god of peace," and states: *Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus,...* Jesus explained much about the function of the Holy Ghost in JOHN chapters 14, 15 and 16, and in JOHN 14:26 He says: *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.* Think of it like this, the Holy Ghost will bring with golden tongs all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. Again in JOHN 16:15 Jesus says this of the Holy Ghost: *All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.* Again think of this verse as meaning *...The Holy Ghost shall take with golden tongs things of mine, and shall shew it unto you.*

The "live coal" in ISAIAH 6:6 figures The Word of God, who is Christ. (Study again for yourself REVELATION 19:13). JEREMIAH 23:29 tells us: *Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?* Fire accomplishes two functions; burning, and purifying. A by-product of fire is heat and light. Fire, by its pure, penetrating, all consuming agency, symbolizes the holiness of God. Here in ISAIAH 6:6 & 7 we find the "live coal" pointing to the cleansing purifying word of God. One of the "seraphims" carried this "live coal" in his hand after first removing it with the golden tongs. How do you handle the word of God? Are you familiar with it? Is it an aid and a comfort to you? Is the word of God a lamp unto your feet, and a light unto your path? (See PSALMS 119:105.) Has the Holy Ghost taken the things of Jesus and made them real to you? The full overcomer has learned how to rightly divide the word of truth, and has no reservation in handling his, or her sword. PSALMS 12:6 reads: *The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.* MALACHI 3:3, in part, tells us this about a refiner and purifier of silver: *And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver:...*

Perhaps you have heard the following story entitled "The Story of the Silver Refiner." "There was a group of women in a Bible study on the book of MALACHI. As

they were studying chapter three, they came across verse three which says: "*he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.*" This verse puzzled the women, and they wondered what this statement meant about the character and nature of God. One of the women offered to find out about the process of refining silver and get back to the group at their next Bible study."

"That week this woman called up a silver smith, and made an appointment to watch him at work. She didn't mention anything about the reason for her interest in silver beyond her curiosity about the process of refining silver."

"As she watched the silver smith, he held a piece of silver over the fire and let it heat up. He explained that in refining silver, one needed to hold the silver in the middle of the fire where the flames were hottest as to burn away all the impurities. The woman thought about God holding us in such a hot spot -- then she thought again about the verse, that he sits a refiner and purifier of silver. She asked the silver smith if it was true that he had to sit there in front of the fire the whole time the silver was being refined. The man answered that yes, he not only had to sit there holding the silver, but he had to keep his eyes on the silver the entire time it was in the fire. If the silver was left even a moment too long in the flames, it would be destroyed."

"The woman was silent for a moment. Then she asked the silver smith, "How do you know when the silver is fully refined?" He smiled at her and answered, "Oh, that's easy -- when I see my image in it." {End of "The Story of the Silver Refiner."} (This story is also found on page 626 of these notes.)

Isaiah saw the image of Christ in the seraphim too, and this should come as no surprise to us either. 1 JOHN 3:2 tells us: *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.* And PHILIPPIANS 3:21 affirms: *Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.* Twice in John's vision of REVELATION he fell down to worship one of the full overcomers thinking it was Jesus, and both times he was corrected, and told to worship God. Obviously John saw Christ's image in them. REVELATION 19:10 *And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.* ...22:9 *Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.*

Let's now take another look at what we just read. ISAIAH 6:5 *Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.* 6 *Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:* 7 *And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.* Paul too expresses a similar thought in ROMANS 7:24 & 25 -- *C wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Who delivered Paul? He tells us his Deliverer was Jesus Christ our Lord. Who delivered Isaiah from his woe's, from his iniquity, from his sin? Isaiah's Deliverer was the same as Paul's, the same as yours and mine, the Lord Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour and Deliverer! David said in PSALM 18:2 *The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.* Again David said in PSALMS 144:1 & 2 -- *Blessed be the LORD my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight: 2 My goodness, and my fortress; my high tower, and my deliverer; my shield, and he in whom I trust; who subdueth my people under me.* David also wrote the following: PSALM 34:6 *This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.* PSALM 34:17 *The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.* PSALM 54:7 *For he hath delivered me out of all trouble:...*

So what are we seeing here in ISAIAH 6:6 & 7? The seraphim that Isaiah saw in his vision that flew unto him with the live coal that touched his lips, and took away his iniquity was none other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself! Christ's Bride, whom Isaiah saw as "the seraphims" are a perfect reflection of Christ also, so the two, Christ and His

Bride look alike, as we noted above. Again we are reminded of what is said in 1 JOHN 3:2 *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.* In scripture Isaiah is the only one who calls the bridal company “the seraphims,” because this was how it was revealed unto him, yet he knew nothing of the Bride of Christ. Isaiah did know of salvation, however, and in fact Isaiah’s name means: “the salvation of Jehovah” the same as Jesus, which means: “Jehovah salvation.” A predominate theme in the writings of Isaiah is the salvation of Jehovah. A couple of quick examples of this are found in the following two scriptures: ISAIAH 12:2 *Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.* ISAIAH 26:4 *Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength:...* We see the salvation of Jehovah referenced here in ISAIAH 6:6 & 7 also.

One more thought here too before we get to verse 8. The Outline of ISAIAH published by Grace and Glory explains that ISAIAH is a miniature Bible. Each of ISAIAH’s 66 chapters corresponds with a book of the Bible. ISAIAH 6 then corresponds with the sixth book of the Bible, JOSHUA, where Joshua’s leadership of the children of Israel pictures Christ leading His people, as a new creation, victoriously into Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey, which is typical of the Messianic Kingdom. We read this account in JOSHUA 5. JOSHUA 5:13 *And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? 14 And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? 15 And the captain of the LORD’S host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so.* The captain of the Lord’s host was none other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, but to Joshua He appeared as the captain of the Lord’s host. To Moses in EXODUS 3:2 the Lord appeared in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush, and told him in verse 14 “I AM THAT I AM.” In JOHN 8:58 we read that *...Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.* To Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus, Jesus Christ appeared unto him a light greater than the noon day sun. These are just a few glimpses of Christ seen in scripture. JOHN 1:9 in fact tells us that Jesus *...was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.* So if Jesus wanted to appear unto Isaiah as one of the seraphims, is that not His privilege? COLOSSIANS 1:17 tells us this of Christ: *And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.*

So far here in ISAIAH 6 we have read that Isaiah has *...seen the King, the LORD of hosts...* in verses 1 and 5, and has been touched by the hand of the Lord in verse 7. He has now been prepared to hear, and properly respond to the voice of the Lord. ISAIAH 6:8 *Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.* Let me explain how we see both GRACE, and FAITH here. The phrase “heard the voice” is found nineteen (FAITH) times in scripture. Equate this to ROMANS 10:17 *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* The phrase “I heard the voice” is found five (GRACE) times in scripture. Three writers of scripture get to write “I heard the voice;” Isaiah here in ISAIAH 6:8; Daniel in DANIEL 10:9; and the Apostle John in REVELATION 5:11; 6:7; and 14:2.

Two questions are asked of the Lord here in ISAIAH 6:8; *...Whom shall I send? And ...who will go for us?* We see the trinity here also. The Lord Jesus asks (*...Whom shall I send?*) on behalf of the trinity, (*...who will go for us?*). Isaiah now can respond to this calling having his mouth, and lips anointed by the Lord. No longer does he feel “Woe is me,” rather after having his mouth, and lips touched by the hand of the Lord Isaiah responds “*...Here am I; send me.*” We already have noted above how those Old Testament Saints of Abraham, Jacob, Moses Samuel, and now Isaiah all answered the voice of the Lord “here I am,” or “here am I,” and are collectively noted to be some of the worthies of faith found mentioned in HEBREWS 11. {See again page 1115 of these notes.} Again these Old Testament worthies of faith heard the voice of the Lord, they heard with listening

ears of hearing, with open hearts of faith, they believed what they heard, and they received and followed by faith the instructions given unto them from the Lord.

ISAIAH 6:8 *Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.* Do you think the Lord now has Isaiah's undivided attention? Do you think Isaiah is really ready to respond to the voice of the Lord? Isaiah has said: *Here am I; send me.* Implied in this statement of faith is the fact that Isaiah is now ready to listen, to hear, and act upon the word of the Lord. Yes Isaiah is indeed ready to heed the words of the Lord, having now been properly equipped to fully receive His word. The Lord didn't have to tell Isaiah, 'now pay attention, I am only going to tell you this once,' for Isaiah was paying attention, and the Holy Ghost was going to help him remember these words of the Lord, which will later be referenced five places in New Testament scripture, as we noted before. Isaiah was willing to go, but he hadn't yet received the message from the Lord. However Isaiah didn't have to wait long, for in verses 9 & 10 we read: *...Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. 10 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.*

Before we examine in more detail the main content of this very important message, let's take a moment to examine these words of the Lord: *...Go, and tell this people,...* . The phrase "go and tell" is found eight times in scripture, which in itself is significant. Recall that the number eight has several associated meanings: NEW CREATION; NEW BIRTH; NEW BEGINNING; RESURRECTION; and also is a number associated with the BRIDE. Thus we begin to see the weight of the Lord's message here that he was giving Isaiah. Isaiah had no idea how far reaching this message from the Lord would be, and really, neither do you, nor I. Isaiah's message is still being spoken today, and many hearts are being dealt with by these very words about the importance of being born again, and putting faith and confidence in our resurrected Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Brother Hill spent some time studying, and reflecting upon this 6th chapter of ISAIAH, which is evident by the notes he wrote here in the margin of his Bible that I have in my possession. He highlighted three words in this chapter that especially got his poetic mind to thinking. The three words he highlighted come from verses 5, 7, and 9: "Woe," "Lo," and "Go." I personally do not recall Brother Hill preaching a sermon from this portion of scripture. Perhaps he did. However the Holy Ghost was using this text to speak to his heart, so Brother Hill wrote in his margin the following thoughts, probably inspired by these three words: "awe inspiring to see God wait on weak humans to do -- the infinite waiting for the finite -- We are exalted to be fellow labourers together with God: "take my yoke... ." (MATTHEW 11:29 *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*) "What dignity hidden in this fellowship, God's holy and unspeakable purpose vested in human ministries, let us stand ready, loins girt, feet shod, etc." (End of Brother Hill's margin notes.) No doubt Brother Hill was referencing thoughts he had written, and preached about from EPHESIANS 6:10-18 found in his study book "The Warfare of the Believer." EPHESIANS 6:10 *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: 18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;...* . Let the words "Woe," "Lo," and "Go" preach a sermon to you too!

Obviously in order to "take my yoke" and "*...Go, and tell this people...*" involves a couple of things. First, a willingness to "go." Secondly a message from the Lord to speak. What we find here as a result of this vision that Isaiah was allowed to witness, was

also a responsibility to deliver the message given him of the Lord. We again recall that when Moses saw the Lord as a flame of fire in a burning bush that wasn't consumed with the fire, that the Lord entrusted Moses with the responsibility to speak a couple of messages. One was to the children of Israel that he was to deliver them out of the land of Egypt. And two, that Pharaoh was to let the children of Israel go from out of the land of Egypt. Moses had his objections with the Lord in EXODUS 3 and 4, but in the end Moses did announce the Lord's message, and the Lord's responsibility was to deliver the children out of the land of Egypt, which He did in a mighty way, by a Mighty Hand. Moses could have said: 'You know Lord this isn't the kind of message I want to deliver. I would rather give a "prosper and be in health" kind of message. After all that would be a more popular message to give, and it would be received a whole lot better.' But Moses knew better, for as a result of his vision he knew that his responsibility was to speak the message given him of the Lord. The Lord wasn't interested in Moses winning any popularity contest. Yet in the end Moses remains one of the most famous men in history.

Consider also our Apostle Paul. Before he became our Apostle, he was known as Saul of Tarsus. The Lord Jesus Christ arrested Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus as He appeared unto him in a blinding light. In ACTS 26:19 Paul tells King Agrippa: *...I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:...* . What did Saul of Tarsus witness in his heavenly vision? The Lord Jesus Christ. Several things took place during this heavenly vision. First of all it was a life changing vision for Saul of Tarsus. Saul of Tarsus immediately realized he was seeing the Lord Jesus Christ, and Jesus even told him: *...I am Jesus whom thou persecutest...* (ACTS 26:15). Instantly believing on the Lord, Saul of Tarsus asked: *...Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* (ACTS 9:6). Implied in this response is a couple of more things. Essentially Saul of Tarsus was acknowledging like Isaiah in ISAIAH 6:5 *...Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.* Also when Saul of Tarsus asked *...Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?...* he was also saying: *...Here am I; send me...* like Isaiah did in ISAIAH 6:8. The Lord then in one sentence gave Saul of Tarsus the message he was to deliver, a pursuit that would last Saul of Tarsus the rest of his life: *...rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me...* ACTS 26:16-18. Saul of Tarsus didn't argue with the Lord at all. He didn't say: 'you know Lord that really isn't the kind of message I want to go tell either. I would be far more popular to give a "prosper and be in health" kind of message. Besides that kind of message would be received a whole lot better too.' However Saul of Tarsus knew better also. He had just witnessed a heavenly life changing vision, and thank the Lord he *...was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:...* . As a result of Saul of Tarsus being willing to *"...Go, and tell this people..."* the message the Lord had given him to tell, he, as the Apostle Paul, became world famous, and, like Moses before him, he too remains one of the most famous men in history.

Now back to Isaiah here in ISAIAH 6. He too remains one of the most famous men in history even though he never sought popularity. He told the Lord in ISAIAH 6:8 *...Here am I; send me...* and the Lord told him *...Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed...* ISAIAH 6:9 & 10.

Note that these are words that are perhaps hard to be understood. Yet these are the words of the Lord, which he gave unto Isaiah to preach! Isaiah didn't complain about what he was give of the Lord to say. Nor did Isaiah shy away from these words either. He wrote them down here in ISAIAH 6! The Lord gave Isaiah the spiritual understanding to clearly see what He was telling him here. This is a key point for us to keep in mind. Isaiah, like Moses and Paul noted above, joined a very select group of Saints noted in scripture who got to witness a vision from the Lord. The Lord doesn't speak in earthly terms that the natural man understands, for *...God is a Spirit: and they*

that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.... JOHN 4:24. The language of heaven confounds the natural man, for often heavenly speech speaks of things only seen in the spiritual realm. We see things with our natural eyes, yet God sees things our natural eyes can not see. For example *...The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man...* PSALMS 94:11. He knows our thoughts afar. He *...seest the reins and the heart...* according to JEREMIAH 20:12. The natural man can not see such things. PROVERBS 15:3 tells us: *The eyes of the LORD are in every place...* So what we are driving at here is the concept that in order to see the things God wants us to see, we need to perceive with eyes of faith. In other words we need the eyes of our understanding to be enlightened as is noted in EPHESIANS 1:18. We see an example of this in 2 KINGS 6. The king of Syria was making an inquiry about Elisha the prophet in Israel, and in 2 KINGS 6 we read the following account: *...13 And he said, Go and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, he is in Dothan. 14 Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about. 15 And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? 16 And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. 17 And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.* The point we want to note here is that it takes eyes of faith, and ears of faith to be able to perceive the important things of God that are otherwise hard to be understood. Such are the eyes of those living creatures found in REVELATION 4:6-8, the New Testament full overcomers, who are: *...full of eyes before and behind...* and *...full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.*

Isaiah, Moses, Paul, Ezekiel, Daniel, and John all had heavenly visions, and wrote what they witnessed and heard, and preached the words given them of the Lord. The Lord gave them as much understanding of His words at that time as he wanted them to have, yet His words remain true. Daniel wished to know more of what he was shown, and wrote about, but we read in DANIEL 12:8 *And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? 9 And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. 10 Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.* So here is what we shall understand, HEBREWS 11:39 *And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: 40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. HEBREWS 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

So again here was the message from the Lord that Isaiah was to preach. ISAIAH 6:9 *And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. 10 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.*

These are heavenly words spoken in the language of heaven, which as we noted above, may be words hard for us to understand. Often times such portions of scripture are further explained in other scriptures for our clarification. Such is the case here, for quotations from ISAIAH 6:9 & 10 are again found in the following five portions of new Testament scripture: MATTHEW 13:14 & 15; MARK 4:12; LUKE 8:10; JOHN 12:40 and ACTS 28:26 & 27. Let's look at these scriptures a little closer in the order we find them in our Bible.

We will start in verse 9 of MATTHEW 13. MATTHEW 13:9 *Who hath ears to hear, let him hear. 10 And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? 11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the*

mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. 12 For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. 13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. Jesus thus explains to the disciples about the multitudes lack of spiritual perception and hearing. Jesus then refers to ISAIAH 6:9 & 10 in His explanation to His disciples of the multitudes spiritual condition.

MATTHEW 13:14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: 15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

Verses 14 and 15 is a direct paraphrasing of ISAIAH 6:9 & 10 in Jesus own words. Let's examine verses 14 & 15 a little closer, thus seeing better what the Lord meant in this statement to Isaiah. In MATTHEW 13:14 we find that the hearer hears without understanding, and sees without perception, thus essentially they are spiritually deaf and blind. In MATTHEW 13:15 we get a clarification of ISAIAH 6:10, where we find that the main cause of this spiritual deaf and blindness is that *...this people's heart is waxed gross*: literally meaning their heart has become fat, and is language denoting one who is foolish in mind. One author notes that here it means that the people were so sensual and corrupt that they did not see nor understand the pure spiritual principles of the gospel. The Apostle Paul stated it like this in 1 CORINTHIANS 2:14 *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* The multitudes that Jesus was referring to had the same character as those of Isaiah's time in that they closed their eyes upon the truth, thus rejecting the Divine teachings of Jesus. MATTHEW 13:15 states that their *...heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed;...*

The last half of ISAIAH 6:10 reads: *...lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.* The last half of MATTHEW 13:15 states: *...lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.* The reason that they didn't see with their eyes, and hear with their ears was that their heart before God was wrong in that they didn't see their lost condition as sinners. It was not the desire of God that they should not be converted, but rather that was the effect upon them for their rejecting His message to them. Jesus notes that if they could recognize with their eyes, and hear with their ears their sinful condition, He was there to pardon their sin and save them, thus this would be healing for them. That is why the Apostle Paul was able to write in 1 TIMOTHY 1:15 *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;...* To the multitude, He was there for them, if they would only hear Him. That's why Jesus said in MATTHEW 13:9 *Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.* Again we read in ROMANS 10:17 *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

MARK 4:12 records the same incident that we just read about in MATTHEW 13, and Mark records Jesus quoting from ISAIAH 6:9 & 10 a little differently. MARK 4:12 *That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.* Here we get a clearer understanding that it was Jesus intention to forgive their sins, if only their hardened hearts would allow their eyes to see, and their ears to hear and believe the Word of God. 2 PETER 3:9 *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.* The Apostle Paul when he came to Thessalonica was glad that there were those in that city who had open ears to hear the gospel message, and open hearts with which to receive Jesus Christ as their own personal Saviour, so he wrote them in 1 THESSALONIANS 2:13 *For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.*

LUKE 8 make brief reference to the same event that we just studied in MATTHEW 13 and in MARK 4. LUKE 8:10 references our scripture in ISAIAH 6:9 & 10 this way: *And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.* Brother Hawkins notes about this verse state: "The parables are actually a hidden code to be understood only by he "that hath ears to hear." They express spiritual mysteries, whereby God separates the true from the false; faith from unbelief. Much of the Word of God is in mystery form, and only they who are truly dedicated to spiritual things, even among believers, can understand them." (End of quote from Brother Hawkins book on the Gospel of LUKE).

We have now seen how the words of Isaiah from ISAIAH 6:9 & 10 were quoted in MATTHEW, MARK, and LUKE, all from the same scene. JOHN also records quotes from ISAIAH 6:9 & 10, but John's example makes reference to a different time frame in the life of Jesus. Yet the message we find concerning this quoting of ISAIAH 6:9 & 10 remains the same.

Our example takes us to JOHN 12 where events during the last week of Jesus life before He was crucified are recorded. By JOHN 12 verse 37 Jesus had departed and hid himself from the people. The Apostle John then writes this in his narrative: JOHN 12:37 *But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: 38 That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?* (This quote comes from ISAIAH 53:1). JOHN 12:39 *Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, (and here John quotes from ISAIAH 6:9 & 10), 40 He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. 41 These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.* Verse 41 is a general reference to ISAIAH chapter 6 as a whole.

We see here in verses 37-41 that Jesus instructions to his disciples had been heard by his disciples with open ears and open hearts. The Apostle John now himself knew the meaning of ISAIAH 6:9 & 10, so he quotes it in his narrative in verse 40. The people at this time of the end of Jesus ministry here on earth had seen His many miracles, heard of Him, and had listened to Him speak personally, yet, like those in Isaiah's day, they would not believe Jesus, or His words. The reason that the people wouldn't believe was as Jesus had already explained to John and the other disciples: *He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.* John had just explained in JOHN 12:37 *But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: 38 That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?* In other words their eyes were blinded by unbelief, and their hearts were hardened by unbelief, and since they believed not on Jesus ...*He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them....* JOHN 12:40.

Now lest we get the idea from JOHN 12:37 above that all did not hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and not believe on Him, John writes the following account in JOHN 12:42 & 43 -- *Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: 43 For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.* So we see that among the chief rulers, many did believe on Him, but because of peer pressure they kept silent. Let's trace this pattern of unbelief by the rulers in Jerusalem for a while.

A few days later Jesus was crucified. ACTS 13:27 tells us: *For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him.* But the words of Jesus still echoed in their ears, for after His crucifixion there were some Pharisee's who went to Pilate telling him what Jesus had spoken: *...After three days I will rise again...* MATTHEW 27:63. Pilate then allow them to set a watch over the sealed sepulchre of Jesus, but that didn't stop the resurrection of Jesus Christ from

the dead! And even though they wished they could silence the words of the prophets, and of Jesus, it didn't happen, and wasn't ever going to happen. In fact just the opposite took place. The word of the Lord was magnified by the power of the Holy Ghost after the day of Pentecost. Actually on the day of Pentecost, Peter, now filled with the Holy Ghost, preached: *This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ...* ACTS 2:32-36. So in spite of the efforts of the chief rulers in Jerusalem, the words of Jesus, and the prophets continued to be magnified. And certainly the following words from Isaiah applied to the rulers in Jerusalem at this time also. ISAIAH 28:14 *Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem.*

The pattern we are pointing out here is the unbelief that was manifest among the chief Jews in Jerusalem. It wasn't that they didn't hear the word of the Lord, for they indeed had, and could even repeat many of the things Jesus had said, but they refused to believe in their heart that Jesus Christ was their Saviour. By their public display of unbelief they had further fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah that we have been studying about from ISAIAH 6:9 & 10. ISAIAH 6:9 *And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. 10 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.* And even after Jesus death and resurrection the word of the Lord was being more and more magnified by the disciples who had now been filled with the Holy Ghost. As you also know from studying ACTS chapters 3 through 5 that by the hands of the Apostles many signs, and wonders, and miracles, and healings, and much expounding of scripture was taking place, and thousands were added to the Lamb's book of life. Peter and John were even told by the rulers, and elders, and scribes, the Jewish Sanhedrin there in Jerusalem, that they no longer could...*...speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus....* ACTS 4:18. Did that threat silence the Apostles? No. ACTS 4:19 & 20 tells us: *But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.* And the word of the Lord continued to be magnified, and the disciples multiplied.

In ACTS chapters 6 and 7 we find the ministry of Stephen highlighted, where Stephen was noted to be a man full of faith, and the Holy Ghost... (ACTS 6:5 & 8). Stephen too was called before these very same rulers of Jerusalem, who now had among them one guy named Saul of Tarsus. Stephen preached a wonderful sermon to these unbelieving rulers in Jerusalem, expounding Old Testament facts and scriptures from the law of Moses, and the Psalms, and the prophets, and even quoted from ISAIAH 66:2 in ACTS 7:50 (*Hath not my hand made all these things?*). But since these Sanhedrin rulers heard indeed, but understood not, and saw indeed, but perceived not, Stephen said unto them in ACTS 7:51-53 these Holy Ghost inspired words: *Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.* These words of Stephen didn't fall on deaf ears, but was received by unbelieving hearts who refused to believe the truth of the gospel, not allowing the Word of the Lord to convert them, and heal them from their sins, thus they stoned Stephen to death. The words of Stephen's sermon were quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and was a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart of one man in attendance that day, Saul of Tarsus. Stephen's sermon echoed in his conscience day and night, constantly pricking his heart. Perhaps the words of Isaiah were pondered over also in Saul of Tarsus mind as he was being dealt with about Stephen's death: ISAIAH 6:9 *...Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. 10 Make the*

heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed. Then a few weeks later while pursuing Christians outside the limits of Jerusalem, Saul of Tarsus got arrested by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus. Paul recalls in ACTS 22:7 hearing indeed the voice of the Lord: *...saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* At that instant Saul of Tarsus became a believer. He indeed saw the Lord, heard the voice of the Lord speaking unto him, and understood it was indeed Jesus Christ who was clearly speaking unto him, and he immediately confessed with his mouth the Lord Jesus, believed in his heart that Christ was raised from the dead, and was then instantaneously forgiven his sins, thus he was converted and healed of his sins at that moment in time! WOW! What a moment. What a miracle! And so is the miracle of life, our new life the instant we were born again.

This event, the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, took place within a few short years after Jesus death and resurrection; probably no more than seven years. Approximately twenty five years after the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, we find this same man, now known the world over as the Apostle Paul, in Rome preaching, and persuading the chief Jews of Rome concerning Jesus. Paul has just concluded an all day sermon in ACTS 28:23, speaking from the law of Moses and the prophets from morning until evening. We read in ACTS 28:24 *And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.* Our well seasoned Apostle must have observed this scene for a few minutes, and reflected in his mind back to the time when he was a young ruler in Jerusalem who believed not the things which were spoken back then concerning Jesus Christ. First hand Paul had been a part of, and witnessed for himself persecutions against Christians, the disciples of the Lord who went about proclaiming the good news of Jesus. Yes, Paul could very well relate to the unbelieving thinking he was witnessing himself here at Rome, for no doubt he could see a reflection of his former self in some of their attitudes as he listened to their reasoning among themselves. Perhaps as Paul observed these unbelieving dispositions amongst the chief Jews of Rome, he might of thought of that verse we know as ISAIAH 44:18 *They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand.* Somewhere in this time frame the Holy Ghost prompted Paul to recall the words of ISAIAH 6:9 & 10, which we have been studying. Luke recorded it like this in ACTS 28. ACTS 28:25 *And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, 26 Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: 27 For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.*

Here too we get some greater insight to Isaiah's words of ISAIAH 6:8 *Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?* Paul explains in ACTS 28:25 that the voice of the Lord that Isaiah heard was indeed the voice of the Holy Ghost, our guide and teacher sent from God the Father in Jesus name to bring to our remembrance all things Jesus, The Word of God, has said unto you and me. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are the "us" spoken of in ISAIAH 6:8. In 2 TIMOTHY 3:16 & 17 we read: *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.* The Holy Ghost is the inspirational agency of the triune God head that spoke the scriptures into the ears of the writers of scripture. Well spoken, and well repeated were the inspired words spoken by Paul, which were first spoken by *...the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them...* ACTS 28:25-27.

Before we further examine this text in ACTS 28, let's finish seeing what Isaiah was told back in ISAIAH 6. After having been given these often quoted words of ISAIAH 6:9 &

10, Isaiah asked the Lord in verse 11 -- *Then said I, Lord, how long?* Isaiah wasn't asking how long should he preach this message, rather he was asking how long shall this condition of hardened hearts, closed ears, and blind eyes prevail in the children of Israel. Sixty-one times in scripture we find the phrase "how long." And we have all asked this kind of question "how long," "how much longer," "how much more time?" If the Lord answers for us these questions, then we must know His answer is true. Here is how the Lord answered Isaiah's question of "how long?" *ISAIAH 6:11 ...And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, 12 And the LORD have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land. 13 But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves: so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.* Isaiah didn't further question the Lord's answer, for he believed the words of the Lord, and knew his mission was to go and tell this people of Israel these words of the Lord, which he did for the rest of his life. Our curiosity of these verses seeks a more specific time frame, and feel free to study this out further for yourself. Prophetically this speaks of a time yet to come. Thus the relevance of ISAIAH 6:9 & 10 still applies today. These words of Isaiah were valid in Jesus day, and in Paul's day too, which is why this portion of scripture was so often quoted.

Since Isaiah believed these important words of the Lord, and knew he was to speak them for the rest of his life, shouldn't we too heed their importance? Yes indeed! Remember that ISAIAH 6 is an Old Testament high water mark of scripture highlighting the importance of hearing the word of the Lord with open hearts of faith. And as believers we should focus for each of ourselves the importance of still hearing the word of the Lord, and receive with open hearts the word of the Lord, and continue to hear, and see, and enjoy the things in His word that are revealed to us by the Holy Ghost. Peter in JOHN 21 began to focus his attention on what his good friend John was to do for the rest of his life, and asked the Lord in JOHN 21:21 *...Lord, and what shall this man do? 22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.* Here Jesus was telling Peter not to worry about the Apostle John, or anyone else for that matter, but to focus his attention on Jesus Christ, and follow Him. We too are told the very same thing in scripture, to focus our attention on the Lord Jesus Christ, and to follow him. And Jesus sent us the Apostle Paul to open our eyes to the truth of the gospel, that our ears also should be open to receive Paul's gospel, because that *...faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God...* ROMANS 10:17. Here again we are reminded of these words of Isaiah found in ISAIAH 28:9 *Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. 10 For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little: 11 For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. 12 To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear. 13 But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.* In other words, we are not going to get it all at once, but *...faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God... ..line upon line, line upon line;... ..precept upon precept, precept upon precept;... ..here a little, and there a little.* Yes we certainly are to follow Paul as he followed Christ, one step of faith at a time, one day at a time, meditating upon the Word of God, one verse at a time, one thought at a time, everyday and all the time. We too can be a New Testament worthy of FAITH, a full overcomer if we will just follow Paul's example. Here is what he encouraged us to do by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost: 1 CORINTHIANS 4:16 *Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.* 1 CORINTHIANS 11:1 *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.* PHILIPPIANS 3:17 *Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.* 2 TIMOTHY 2:15 *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* The Holy Ghost left us one hundred chapters in scripture written by the Apostle Paul. One hundred again is the number of COMPLETION; a number which points to a complete finished usable product, 100% whole, and speaks of those one-hundred percent fruitful in Christ Jesus; complete in Him in all things. Such is the

bride of Christ! She is one-hundred percent focused upon Him in all things. Now do you see why knowing the one hundred chapters of Paul's gospel is so important to your spiritual COMPLETION? Where is your attention focused? And perhaps a better worded question is: upon Whom is your attention focused?

Back to ACTS 28, and the Apostle Paul addressing the chief Jews of Rome on the day they themselves had appointed him to speak to them. After quoting from ISAIAH 6:9 & 10, Paul's concluding words were: *Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it....* ACTS 28:28. The theme of this verse emphasizes the foundational recurring subject of Paul's all day message that he preached that appointed day in Rome, which was "the salvation of God." Yes, the subject of "the salvation of God" can fill an all day sermon, for it incorporates thoughts of deliverance, safety, security, preservation, healing, justification, redemption, and forgiveness of sins just to mention a few topics of discussion that Paul already had that day. An expounded translation of ACTS 28:28 reads: "Let it be plainly understood, and take notice, that this message of God's salvation has been sent to the heathen, and they, at least, will listen to it." Perhaps we detect a little frustration in Paul's tone here, because he wanted all that he came in contact with to receive, as he had, the wonderful truth of the inexpressible love of God manifest in His gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. {Study ROMANS 6:23.} This statement of ACTS 28:28 probably pricked the deepest into the hearts of the chief Jews of Rome who still didn't believe the things which were spoken by Paul in his all day sermon of persuasion concerning "the salvation of God" that is referenced in ACTS 28:23-28. No doubt these Jews thought from their traditions that they already knew "the salvation of God."

Religious traditions, Jewish traditions, and any other kind of men's traditions should by now really raise a red flag in your mind, especially if you recall what we have said about following these traditions in lessons past. {Review pages 204, 279, 389-390. and 873 of these notes.} In COLOSSIANS 2:8 Paul warns against some things, including traditions of men, stating: *Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.* The word "tradition" used here comes from the Greek word *paradosis* {par-ad'-os-is}, number 3862 in the Strong's Greek Concordance, and is one of two words I have found so far that numerically adds up to 666. (The other Greek word that adds up to 666 is *euporia* {yoo-por-ee'-ah}, number 2142 in the Strong's Greek Concordance, translated "wealth" as found in ACTS 19:25 *Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth <2142>.*) REVELATION 13:18 tells us: *Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.* Over the centuries there have been a lot of traditions of men that have kept many from ever receiving Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour, and other traditions have hindered believers from ever achieving God's best. We are best off not to follow traditions of men. Brother Hill when he was alive often told the story of going to Regis college to meet with the Catholic Bishop up there at the request of a couple of young men in his meeting at that time. The Bishop listened to Brother Hill expound some scriptures, and then mentioned that the Catholic church had all the Saints. Brother Hill informed the Bishop that it was by accepting Jesus Christ into your heart as your personal Saviour that made one a Saint, and that His church is full of Saints. Brother Hill gave scriptures to back up his position. After a short period of time the Bishop admitted to Brother Hill that he had the scriptures all right, but that they in the Catholic Church had tradition. Well pursuing tradition is not necessarily a good thing. Following Catholic traditions is not how one gets saved. Following Jewish tradition is not how one gets saved either.

We note then that following such religious traditions has hindered many from learning about "the salvation of God." These religions teach do, do, do. No wonder Saul of Tarsus asked the Lord, "*...Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*" in ACTS 9:6 for he was expert in the religion of "do." Jesus met Saul of Tarsus at his level, and told him what to "do," and that was to become an expert in the doctrine of "done." Paul learned from the Lord to teach, and preach "the salvation of God" a finished work "done" by Jesus Christ upon the cross! Jesus last words upon the cross were "*...it is finished:...*" done. No more

do, do, do in order to be saved, but done, done, done, for by grace are ye saved! This in simplest terms defines Paul's gospel message, a life time pursuit of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus from the dusty road to Damascus, to his crown in glory, all the time enjoying the benefits done, done, done and finished by Jesus Christ as He completed redemption's journey at Calvary. So in a dark mile when asked by the Philippian jailor, "...Sirs, what must I do to be saved?..." (ACTS 16:30), Paul along with Silas was able to answer "...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house..." ACTS 16:31. Accepting "the salvation of God" this Phillipian jailor became one of the earliest members of the church at Philippi, lovers of the race horse, who themselves became race course runners, taught by Paul to forget those things which are behind, and press forward toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus! {Study PHILIPPIANS 3:13 & 14.} Simply put then, "the salvation of God" comes from believing in a finished work that was completed upon the cross by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ our Lord. With Christ as our solid foundation Paul then urges us to go on unto perfection, and win Christ as our Bridegroom. {Study HEBREWS 6:1 and PHILIPPIANS 3:8.} Such an uplifting tradition we are encouraged to follow, as we follow Paul as he followed Christ. The Apostle Paul tells us in 2 THESSALONIANS 2:15 *Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.*

We are still looking at ACTS 28:28 *Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.* These were Paul's parting words to the chief Jews of Rome. He was telling them that didn't yet believe, they had missed the mark, and had failed to see the point of what he had expounded unto them this whole day. Again the theme of this verse emphasizes the foundational recurring subject of Paul's all day message that he preached that appointed day in Rome, which was "the salvation of God." There are at least 385 scriptures that address "the salvation of God," but what these unbelieving chief Jews of Rome failed to see that day was this foundational truth; that "the salvation of God" comes through faith which is in Christ Jesus... (paraphrasing from 2 TIMOTHY 3:15). Again ACTS 4:10-12 tells us that there is none other name than Jesus Christ of Nazareth given among men whereby we must be saved. Without Christ's salvation we are dead in trespasses and sins according to EPHESIANS 2:1. Simply put these unbelieving chief Jews of Rome that came to Paul that day to hear what he had to say concerning the sect called Christians failed to see that Jesus Christ was indeed their Saviour. Jesus Christ is the foundation upon which the mystical body of Christ is built. {Review page 287-290 of these notes.} 1 CORINTHIANS 3:11 explains: *For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* Without a solid foundation Paul could take them no further, which is why he said in ACTS 28:28 *Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.* So we are going to review some more scriptural points on how the unbelieving chief Jews of Rome failed to see the basic foundational truth of Jesus Christ being their Saviour; which points of truth they had really been taught in their Old Testament scriptures if they would only believe what had been written unto them!

Realize in this all day sermon of Paul's in ACTS 28:23-29 before the chief Jews of Rome, that Paul in essence went over with them in person some of the very same foundational principals he had expounded upon in his ROMANS epistle. Of course ROMANS was addressed to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called Saints, or in other words was written unto the Christians in Rome. {See ROMANS 1:7.} Paul explains that his main purpose in writing them was to see that they became established in his gospel. Paul addressed this fact in ROMANS 1:11, and concluded his letter stating this in ROMANS 16:25 -- *Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, 26 But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: 27 To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.* These men in Rome whom Paul addressed on this day appointed him in ACTS 28:23 were ignorant of Paul's epistle written to the ROMANS. They couldn't be established in Paul's gospel for they didn't yet have a solid foundation upon which to be

established. Recall also that these chief Jews of Rome claimed that they hadn't heard of Paul before this time, but they had heard of "this sect" called Christians, and had wished to hear from Paul himself what his thinking was concerning this sect. Of course we know that Paul's thinking as a well traveled, and well seasoned Apostle was one hundred percent of the time focused upon Jesus. His purpose this day was to lay a firm solid foundation upon which to build, and expound the doctrinal principles that Paul was given to preach on the road to Damascus back in ACTS 26:16-18. We will mention more about this shortly, but the solid Rock foundation Paul was laying that day in Rome was none other than Jesus Christ. Review again on your own ACTS 4:10-12, and see that Peter also told the Sanhedrin council that Jesus Christ of Nazareth was the chief corner stone, by whose name one must be saved: *...for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.* Study again ACTS 26:18 and note that Paul was told by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself to preach the *...forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in...* Christ Jesus. This statement reveals levels of growth that only can be achieved by building upon the solid foundational Rock of Christ our Saviour, who gave Himself a ransom for all at Calvary. So we note that the first step in becoming established in Paul's gospel is to first have an everlasting strong and firm foundation upon which to build the principles of Paul's gospel. Such a foundation is spoken of in countless scriptures from both the Old and New Testament, one of which is ISAIAH 28:16 *Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.* Another portion of scripture from ISAIAH 8 reads: *13 Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. 14 And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 15 And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.* (These particular verses are either referenced, or alluded to in MATTHEW 7:24 & 25; MATTHEW 21:42; LUKE 20:17 & 18; ACTS 4:11; ROMANS 9:33; EPHESIANS 2:20; and 1 PETER 2:4-8.) Here we also see the solid foundation laid in the Old Testament upon which the doctrines, and principles of the New Testament were built. Again that solid foundation is Jesus Christ Himself. HEBREWS 9:15 explains it this way stating that Jesus Christ *...is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.*

Having now noted a little of how Paul spent the day with these chief Jews of Rome explaining to them in person some of the very same foundational principals he had expounded upon in his ROMANS epistle, let's read a little of what Paul wrote on this subject in ROMANS. (We will be referencing chapters 9, 10, and 11 mostly. Interestingly the scriptures, and even the letters of Paul, are not presented to us in our Bible in chronological order, but rather are left for us in the order ordained by the Holy Ghost, the inspiration of all scripture. The book of ROMANS is the first one of Paul's epistles in the order we find it in our Bible, but was probably the sixth letter Paul wrote. However ROMANS is in the correct spot in our Bible. For as we have noted previously the book of ROMANS turns out to be the centerpiece of all Paul's gospel records. It probably took him the better part of three months to write it. Sister Bodie notes: "The letter to the Romans is a very important one. It lays the foundation for all of Paul's other letters. It is the trunk, from which all the other Pauline epistles branch out, laden with grace and glory fruit, from which any one may pick and eat that variety of fruit best suited to his taste and needs." (End of quoting from Sister Bodie.) Stated another way, the book of ROMANS lays for us a foundation upon which Paul's doctrinal message can further be expounded upon in his other epistles.) ROMANS 9, 10, and 11 were written to explain Israel's past (chapter 9), Israel's present (chapter 10), and Israel's future (chapter 11). Paul writes in ROMANS 9:1-5 -- *I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, 2 That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. 3 For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: 4 Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; 5 Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.* Paul goes on in

ROMANS 9 to explain how the children of Israel are descendants from Abraham, however they didn't all believe God like Abraham did, for Abraham believed we are justified by faith, and not by the works of the law. They never realized that Abraham was not under the law, having lived more than four hundred before the law was ever given. So Paul concludes ROMANS 9 by writing: *31 But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. 32 Wherefore? (Why?) Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; 33 As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.* Here Paul quotes from ISAIAH 28:16, and ISAIAH 8:14 which we referenced in the above paragraph. One has to wonder if Paul didn't use these exact words during his all day sermon of ACTS 28:23. No doubt he expressed these very same thoughts.

In ROMANS 10:1 Paul expresses a thought that weighed heavily on his mind everywhere he went, as we too have witnessed in this study. Here is what he wrote: ROMANS 10:1 *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.* Show me one place that Paul went where he didn't at least attempt to preach his gospel to the Jew first. Why was this? ROMANS 10:1 explains it: *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.* This expresses the same thing Jesus Himself had told that ruler of the Jews, Nicodemus, back in JOHN 3. JOHN 3:3 *...Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. ...7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.* Imagine telling a self righteous law abiding Pharisee that "Ye must be born again." How many times did that law abiding self righteous Pharisee, Saul of Tarsus, hear the very same thing before he got saved on the road to Damascus? No wonder then that Paul's *...heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.* Believing on Jesus Christ as his own personal Saviour was the foundational step upon which was *...built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.* (See 1 PETER 2:5.) In ROMANS 10:2 & 3 as well as in ROMANS 3:20 Paul explains that the Jew especially went about to establish their own righteousness by following the works of the law of Moses. ROMANS 3:20 tells us: *Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.* In ROMANS 10:4 Paul wrote: *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.* Paul then explains how anyone gets saved. ROMANS 10:9 *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.* This statement is a direct paraphrasing of ISAIAH 28:16 which we noted above also: *Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.* Paul also quotes a couple of more times from ISAIAH in the remaining verses of ROMANS 10. ROMANS 10:13 *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.* (Here Paul has quoted from JOEL 2:32.) 14 *How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! (Paul is quoting from ISAIAH 52:7, and in verse 16 Paul quotes from ISAIAH 53:1.) 16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? 17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* We have been highlighting this verse a lot in the previous pages of these notes. Paul concludes ROMANS 10 writing words that still pertain to Israel's present spiritual state, and in ACTS 28 Paul once again got to witness these very same attitudes. ROMANS 10:18 *But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. 19 But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. 20 But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. 21 But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.* (These last two verse are taken from ISAIAH 65:1 & 2.) How well

the Apostle Paul knew these Jewish attitudes!

ROMANS 11 has a lot to say regarding Israel's future, and also tells...that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it... ACTS 28:28. In this chapter Paul explains that he too is an Israelite with deep concerns for the children of Israel, and his heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel continues to be that they might be saved. Yet concerning Israel Paul writes in ROMANS 11:11 *I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.* Paul then acknowledges that he was also sent unto the Gentiles as their Apostle. So he writes in ROMANS 11:13 *For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: 14 If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.* If one verse could sum up ROMANS 11 it would probably be verse 25: *For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.* On your own take the time to further study ROMANS 11, and see what else Paul wrote in this chapter.

We have now introduced some thoughts found in Paul's parting words spoken unto the chief Jews at Rome here in ACTS 28:28 *Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.* Go back up to verse 23 and see that Paul spent the day *...persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets...* Verse 24 told us that *...some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.* The bottom line is that they all didn't believe that Jesus Christ was indeed the promised Messiah spoken of in ISAIAH 9, and many other scriptures. ISAIAH 9:6 *For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.* Paul had just spent the whole day expounding about his Saviour Jesus Christ, whom Isaiah spoke of in these verses, whose name is also *...called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.* Perhaps during the course of this all day sermon Paul read to the chief Jews of Rome ISAIAH 43, expounding more about our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and "the salvation of God."

ISAIAH 43:1 *But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. 2 When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. 3 For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. 4 Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. 5 Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; 6 I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; 7 Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him. 8 Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears. 9 Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and shew us former things? let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified: or let them hear, and say, It is truth. 10 Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. 11 I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour. 12 I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I am God. 13 Yea, before the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it? 14 Thus saith the LORD, your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; For your sake I have sent to*

Babylon, and have brought down all their nobles, and the Chaldeans, whose cry is in the ships. 15 I am the LORD, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King. 16 Thus saith the LORD, which maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters; 17 Which bringeth forth the chariot and horse, the army and the power; they shall lie down together, they shall not rise: they are extinct, they are quenched as tow. 18 Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. 19 Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert. 20 The beast of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls: because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen. 21 This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise. 22 But thou hast not called upon me, C Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, C Israel. 23 Thou hast not brought me the small cattle of thy burnt offerings; neither hast thou honoured me with thy sacrifices. I have not caused thee to serve with an offering, nor wearied thee with incense. 24 Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices: but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities. 25 I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins. 26 Put me in remembrance: let us plead together: declare thou, that thou mayest be justified. 27 Thy first father hath sinned, and thy teachers have transgressed against me. 28 Therefore I have profaned the princes of the sanctuary, and have given Jacob to the curse, and Israel to reproaches.

If Paul had expounded thoughts about "the salvation of God" from the book of ISAIAH, then he surly also read to these chief Jews of Rome from chapter 45. Here is part of what he might have read concerning "the salvation of God" from ISAIAH 45. (You can read this whole chapter on your own; I will only reference a few verses.) ISAIAH 45:5 I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: 6 That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else. 7 I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things. 8 Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the LORD have created it. ...11 Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me. 12 I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded. 13 I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the LORD of hosts. 14 Thus saith the LORD, The labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine: they shall come after thee; in chains they shall come over, and they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee, saying, Surely God is in thee; and there is none else, there is no God. 15 Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, C God of Israel, the Saviour. ...17 But Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end. 18 For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else. 19 I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things that are right. ...21 Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me. 22 Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. 23 I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. 24 Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. 25 In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.

So what does all of this have to do with our studies on the life of the Apostle Paul, and specifically the verse we have come to in ACTS 28:28? The answer is found in ACTS 28:28 itself: *Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.* The Apostle Paul has spent this whole day of ACTS 28:23-28 expounding from the Old Testament, scriptures concerning Jesus Christ, and how He is the foundational solid Rock of the salvation of God. PSALMS 95:1 expresses it like this: *Come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.* Certainly in this day of expounding scriptures unto the chief Jews of Rome the name of Moses must have come up. You know that it did. Connecting the dots then we must make an educated assumption that these chief Jews of Rome were at least familiar with the songs of Moses, of which there are two highlighted in scripture. EXODUS 15 tells of the song of redemption that Moses and the children of Israel sang after being redeemed out of the land of Egypt. Paul had spent the whole day in ACTS 28:23-28 explaining unto the chief Jews of Rome that it was Jesus Christ who was their Redeemer. After nearly forty years of wandering in the wilderness Moses taught the remaining children of Israel another song. We find this second song referenced in DEUTERONOMY 31 & 32.

In DEUTERONOMY 31 we will start examining the origins of this song of Moses beginning with verse 14 -- *And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thy days approach that thou must die: call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tabernacle of the congregation, that I may give him a charge. And Moses and Joshua went, and presented themselves in the tabernacle of the congregation. 15 And the LORD appeared in the tabernacle in a pillar of a cloud: and the pillar of the cloud stood over the door of the tabernacle. 16 And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; and this people will rise up, and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land, whither they go to be among them, and will forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them. 17 Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not among us? 18 And I will surely hide my face in that day for all the evils which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods. 19 Now therefore write ye this song for you, and teach it the children of Israel: put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel. 20 For when I shall have brought them into the land which I swear unto their fathers, that floweth with milk and honey; and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen fat; then will they turn unto other gods, and serve them, and provoke me, and break my covenant. 21 And it shall come to pass, when many evils and troubles are befallen them, that this song shall testify against them as a witness; for it shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their seed: for I know their imagination which they go about, even now, before I have brought them into the land which I swear. 22 Moses therefore wrote this song the same day, and taught it the children of Israel. ...30 And Moses spake in the ears of all the congregation of Israel the words of this song, until they were ended.*

DEUTERONOMY 32:1-42 is the song of Moses that God gave Moses to ...*teach it the children of Israel: put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel...* (DEUTERONOMY 31:19 above). Read and study this prophetic song for yourself, and see that it contains facts concerning God's relationship with Israel who He nationally has put to the fore front. Emphasized in this song is the Rock, a reference to Christ our solid foundational Rock. We find the word "Rock" capitalized seven times in scripture, and four of these seven times is here in DEUTERONOMY 32. Seven again is the number that points us to SPIRITUAL PERFECTION or SPIRITUAL COMPLETION, and, of course, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is the epitome of SPIRITUAL PERFECTION. The seven times in scripture we find the word "Rock" capitalized are as follows: DEUTERONOMY 32:4 *He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.* DEUTERONOMY 32:18 *Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee.* DEUTERONOMY 32:30 *How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had shut them up?* DEUTERONOMY

32:31 *For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges.* 2 SAMUEL 23:3 *The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.* And twice in 1 CORINTHIANS 10:4 we find the word "Rock" used in reference to the time the children of Israel wandered forty years in the wilderness: *And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.* Here we find plainly stated: ...that Rock was Christ.

In DEUTERONOMY 32:44 we read: *And Moses came and spake all the words of this song in the ears of the people, he, and Hoshea the son of Nun.* Since the Jews were taught this song of Moses down through their generations, don't you suppose that these chief Jews of Rome, whom Paul had addressed in ACTS 28:23-28, were familiar with this song? Paul was trying to get them to see that the salvation of God is based on none other than the foundational solid Rock of Christ. Of course the solid Rock, the sure foundation upon whom we can place our faith, confidence, and trust is none other than our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Himself, the Captain of our salvation! Again ISAIAH 28:16 states it like this: *Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste (shall not be moved).* Again recall that Peter Himself had quoted ISAIAH 28:16 in the following verses of 1 PETER. 1 PETER 2:4 *To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,* 5 *Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.* 6 *Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.* 7 *Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,* 8 *And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.* Jesus Christ had made it plainly known to Peter and the other disciples that He (Jesus) was the Rock Himself. We read this in MATTHEW 16 where Jesus asks in MATTHEW 16:15 *...But whom say ye that I am?* 16 *And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.* 17 *And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.* 18 *And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* We have expounded on verse 18 before, (see page 282 of these notes), and noted that Jesus here tells Peter, "Peter your name means a pebble, a little stone, a little rock, and Peter, little rock, upon this Rock, (Jesus Christ Himself) I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Brother Hill explained it like this in his last sermon of March 6, 2005: "Peter you have just confessed me as you personal Saviour. On that testimony, on that statement I am going to build my church." Peter understood what Jesus said, and what Jesus meant, and on the day of Pentecost began building that church, for after Peter's sermon pointing the hearers to Christ the solid Rock, about three thousand souls were saved. {ACTS 2:41}. One more thought concerning the Rock. King David being that Old Testament overcomer that he was, who at an early age was taught by his mother to put his faith, trust and confidence in the Lord, knew Jesus as his Lord and Saviour, and the Rock of his salvation, and sung these facts in another song that these chief Jews of Rome were no doubt familiar with, which is recorded for us in 2 SAMUEL 22 and PSALMS 18. Here is some of what he sang: 2 SAMUEL 22:2 also PSALMS 18:2: *And he said, The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer;... .* 2 SAMUEL 22:3 *The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence.* PSALMS 18:31 *For who is God save the LORD? or who is a rock save our God? ...46 The LORD liveth; and blessed be my rock; and exalted be the God of the rock of my salvation.*

ACTS 28:28 *Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.* We have spent a lot of time already looking at this verse, and the reason we have done so is that this one verse really explains Paul ministry. He spent a tremendous amount of time this particular day preaching unto the chief Jews of Rome laying the foundation of his gospel message, which is Jesus Christ.

(We will talk more about this in a couple of paragraphs.) Once the foundation is laid, then one can begin to build a building. However nothing more can be accomplished with these chief Jews at Rome until they take that first step, and believe that Jesus Christ is the foundation Rock talked about by Moses in DEUTERONOMY 32 upon which their faith in God must be based. Recall that the gospel of the Apostle Paul was given unto him by Jesus Christ to be used to lay the solid Rock foundation in the lives of all believers. We are told in Jesus day that *...He came unto his own, and his own received him not...* JOHN 1:11. Paul too came unto his own, the Jew first, but then he went on to expound his gospel unto the Gentiles. So Paul was chosen by our Lord and Saviour to present the gospel unto the Jew first, and then unto the Gentiles. Paul was told this when the Lord Jesus Christ spoke unto him on the road to Damascus these words in ACTS 26:17 *Delivering thee from the people...* which Paul understood to mean that he was chosen from among the Jews to be a minister not only to the Jews first of all, but also, and especially unto the Gentiles. Paul explains this fact a little in ROMANS 1:16 writing: *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.* Again recall what Paul also wrote in ROMANS 10:1 *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.* Thus the pattern of the Apostle Paul on his missionary journeys everywhere he went was to first go unto the synagogues of the Jews (if there was a synagogue to go to) in all the cities he visited.

In the first sermon we studied of Paul's found in ACTS 13:16-41, Paul preached in a synagogue of the Jews, but in so doing he was also addressing the Gentiles in attendance. Note again how he began his sermon to this assembly in Antioch in Pisidia in ACTS 13:16 -- *Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.* The "ye that fear God" were addressed separately because they were non Jews, thus Paul was also speaking unto the Gentiles. So yes Paul went to the Jew first everywhere he went, but in so doing he was also reaching out unto the Gentiles. Later in his sermon to those of Antioch in Pisidia we read of Paul reaching out to the Gentiles again in ACTS 13:26: *Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.* Whosoever among you that feareth God included the Gentiles who were present at this sermon. After preaching there for a couple of weeks we read in ACTS 13:46 *Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: (you Jews) but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.* 47 *For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.*

We saw that this was the pattern everywhere Paul went, preaching to the Jew first, and in so doing the Lord opened the doors for him to preach unto the Gentiles. ACTS 17:1 & 2 notes: *Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: 2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures...* "As his manner was" shows that Paul first tried to speak unto the Jews if he could in every city he visited. Of course they would welcome him to do so, for after all he was a Pharisee, and dressed as a Pharisee, whom the Jewish people were taught to respect. ACTS 18:4 notes: *And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.* Of course the Greeks were non Jews, thus they are considered Gentiles. In ACTS 18:19 we read of this same thing happenings at Ephesus: *And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews.* When Paul returned to Ephesus on his third missionary journey, we read in ACTS 19:8 *And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.* 9 *But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.* 10 *And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.* Both "Jews and Greeks" means that Paul preached to both Jew and Gentile.

Recall also that Paul preached in Ephesus as long as he preached anywhere. He established the church of Ephesus, and then years later history records that Paul's close

associate and traveling companion Timothy became the pastor in Ephesus. The roots Paul established in Ephesus were as deep as any of his earthly roots. Many of his closest friends came from this time Paul preached there. Aquila and Priscilla lived there. Trophimus was an Ephesian according to ACTS 21:29, and perhaps Tychicus was too. In 2 TIMOTHY 4:12 Paul writes: *And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus.* The whole point in noting all of this is to realize the strong foundation upon which the building blocks of Paul's gospel message was built. And we just read in ACTS 19:10 how far Paul's gospel reached, *...so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.* After the great uprising of the silversmiths at Ephesus, Paul left Ephesus, but this assembly remained close to his heart. He later wrote them an epistle which Brother Hill called a high water mark of Paul's writings, noting that "EPHESIANS gives us the loftiest levels of teaching found in the Bible." As Paul returned to Jerusalem for the last time as he completed his third missionary journey, he passed close enough to Ephesus to send for the elders of Ephesus, and have them meet his ship at Miletus. This took place in ACTS 20:18-38. Read this portion of scripture again for yourself, and see the words Paul spoke unto them to encourage them in the faith as they continued to follow Paul's teaching. Here is what Paul told them in ACTS 20:32 *And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.* Let's review the teaching here for a moment, and see how it ties in with what we have been seeing here in Rome. "The word of his grace" is the oh so important foundation "which is able to build" up the Saints! Jesus Christ Himself is "The Word of God" as we have so many time before noted in REVELATION 19:13. Jesus is also that sure foundation as noted above in ISAIAH 28:16 *Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.* Peter quoted this scripture in 1 PETER 2:6 *Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.* The Apostle Paul also notes that Jesus is that sure foundation in this statement found in 1 CORINTHIANS 3:10 & 11: *According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* Upon this solid foundation can be raised a building, a building of the Lord's. 1 CORINTHIANS 3:9 tells us: *For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.* These Ephesian elders already knew what we just read here in 1 CORINTHIANS 3:9, for Paul had already taught them these very same truths, having written 1 CORINTHIANS 3:9 from Ephesus. So Paul states here in ACTS 20:32 *And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up,...* . The Greek word Paul uses here translated "to build you up" is epoikodomeo {ep-oy-kod-om-eh'-o}, number 2026 in the Strong's Greek Concordance, found eight times in scripture. Here the word is applied to a house which is raised and completed in degrees, and by toil. It means to build upon, or to build up, and to finish the structure of which the foundation (The Rock Christ Jesus) has already been laid, to give constant increase in Christian knowledge, and in a life conformed thereto.

We noted here that epoikodomeo {ep-oy-kod-om-eh'-o}, number 2026 in the Strong's Greek Concordance, which is translated in ACTS 20:32 "to build you up," is found eight times in New Testament scripture. Again one of the meanings of the number eight points us to the BRIDE of Christ. One of the first scriptures that begins to teach about the Bride of Christ is in GENESIS 2:22, which reads: *And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.* The word "made" here in GENESIS 2:22 is the same Hebrew word that translates into: build, built, buildeth, build up, plus some other meanings, and also means: to be built, to be built up, and to be established. In light of what we have just learned, we can read GENESIS 2:22 this way: *And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, buildeth he a woman, and brought her unto the man.* The gospel of the Apostle Paul was specifically given to build up Saints, and there will be a rib portion of these Saints from this present church age that will be taken from the body of Christ, also known as the church, from

which He will build a woman, known as His Bride, who will be brought unto The Man, Christ Jesus! This is the building work that is still in progress today. *And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, builded he a woman, and brought her unto the man...* Christ Jesus!

The Apostle Paul also acknowledges that Jesus Christ is the chief foundation corner stone as noted above in ISAIAH 28:16 in his writing the following passage from EPHESIANS 2. EPHESIANS 2:19 *Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; 20 And are built (<2026> epoikodomeo {ep-oy-kod-om-eh'-o}), upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; 21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.* There will never be a Master piece of His construction without such a sure and perfect foundation. EPHESIANS 2:10 *For we are his workmanship, (His Masterpiece in the making) created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. 11 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; 12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: 13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. 14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; 16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: 17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. 18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. 19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; 20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; 21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.*

These then were Paul's parting words to the chief Jews of Rome: ACTS 28:28 *Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.* We could expound Paul's words like this to convey the complete thought he was expressing here: "Be it know unto you, fellow Jews, children of Abraham, God's chosen people, that this message of God's salvation has been sent unto the Gentiles, for God is no respecter of persons, and is now visiting the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name, and these heathen Gentiles, at the very least, will listen with open hearts to this message of God's salvation." I don't know if Paul had used the word "Gentiles" in his all day sermon, or not, however ACTS 28:28 were Paul's final words recorded in scripture that he spoke to these chief Jews at Rome. They didn't have a fit like the Jews of Jerusalem did when Paul gave his defence testimony back in ACTS 22:21 & 22 where we read this after Paul had said the word "Gentiles:" *...they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.* These Jews of Rome were under the careful watchful eye of the Roman soldiers too, however Paul had told them all he could that day, and thus his day with the chief Jews of Rome was ended.

ACTS 28:29 tells what happened next that day: *And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.* We have spent a tremendous amount of time going over the events of this one day spoken of in ACTS 28:23-29. It was a most important day for those chief Jews at Rome. The fact remains *...some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not...* ACTS 28:24. Luke does note here that they did have great reasoning among themselves. The Greek word translated "reasoning" in ACTS 28:29 is *suzetesis* {sood-zay'-tay-sis}, number 4803 in the Strong's Greek Concordance, which simply means a mutual questioning, and in this case was a mutual questioning among the chief Jews of Rome themselves. Some commentators, and translators omit verse 29 indicating that some supposed original

manuscripts fail to include this verse because it seems to repeat what was said in verses 24 and 25 to some extent. And if you take the time to look up the differences in the words *...they agreed not among themselves...* in verse 25, with the what is said in verse 29, they *...had great reasoning among themselves...* I think you will find that another story is told. For in verse 25 it seems *...they agreed not among themselves...* includes Paul in the conversation. And Paul did add one more statement from ISAIAH 6:9 & 10 as he made one final effort in getting them to see Jesus as their Messiah in verse 26-28. In verse 29 the statement they *...had great reasoning among themselves...* doesn't include Paul in the mix, meaning that these chief Jews of Rome had a mutual questioning among themselves, the chief Jews of Rome, Paul himself being excluded from their conversations as they departed.

So what we see here in ACTS 28:29 is several doors. Jesus said in JOHN 10:9 *I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.* Paul had spent the whole day trying to get these chief Jews of Rome to go through this door, and let Jesus enter into the door of their heart. Jesus says in REVELATION 3:20 *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.* (Brother Fuller used this verse repeatedly on weekly visits to the Golden Gate Youth Camp back in the late sixties, and early seventies in closing words to his sermons, and in the process over two hundred troubled young men gave their hearts to the Lord!) Still another door we find in verse 29 is the door to Paul's quarters, through which these men were departing. To some this door was their door of opportunity to get saved, through which they never again returned. God only knows who, and how many they were. Should others of these chief Jews of Rome wish to hear more about Jesus from Paul, they would have to enter in once again through this very same door, and again only God knows how many of them took advantage of the two year opportunity that laid there before them, though they didn't know how long Paul would be held in these quarters at this time.

As we conclude this chapter in our notes, keep in mind as we continue to explore Paul's life that while here in Rome, at this point in time, Paul had been given privileges not afforded normal prisoners, which we talked about back in ACTS 28:16 where we read: *...but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.* And we noted that one translation here states that "Paul received permission to live by himself, guarded by a soldier," which would have been among the best who guarded the Emperors palace. We have now seen how Paul's quarters became like a church where Paul further expounded his gospel message. And he was allowed of God to preach his gospel message here in Rome, without outside interference, for no one was going to heckle the Apostle Paul while in the custody of the best Roman guards. ACTS 28:30 & 31 also points this out: *And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, 31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.* Paul was allowed to freely receive all that came unto him, preaching to them the kingdom of God, and teaching them the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul wasn't free to go out amongst the people of Rome and do this teaching and preaching, rather the Lord saw to it that those who wanted to could come and hear Paul unabated. Once again this is really quite amazing if you think about it. Keep in mind here also that verse 31 points out Paul had freedom of speech, for no man was forbidden to come unto Paul during this time, if they wanted to hear him. In other words the Roman soldier in charge of Paul was under orders not to forbid anyone who wanted to see Paul, to see him, Jews and Gentiles. How was it *...that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it....* ACTS 28:28? In the next few months Paul will write in PHILIPPIANS 1:12 *But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; 13 So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places;...* . The palace Paul references is none other than that massive palace of Nero's, which Sister Bodie wrote about in an article re-printed in the January 2013 issue of Grace and Glory magazine. Later in PHILIPPIANS 4 Paul would write greetings from many Roman Christians: *21 Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you. 22 All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household. 23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.* They that were of Caesar's household were obviously Romans!